

ITALY AND HER INVADERS

376—476

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VOL. II

BOOK II. THE HUNNISH INVASION

BOOK III. THE VANDAL INVASION AND THE HERULIAN MUTINY

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[N.B. The Mosaic of the Virgin over the altar is of the eleventh or twelfth century. All the other Mosaics are believed to be of the fifth century.]	
Map of Asia at the Christian era, according to Chinese his- torians quoted in Deguigne's <i>Histoire des Huns</i>	<i>To face page 1.</i>
Map of Europe in the year 451	<i>„ page 113.</i>
Map of Gaul at the time of Attila's invasion	<i>„ page 127.</i>
Coins : Eastern and Western Emperors : fifth century (A.D. 450-476) (Plate V)	<i>„ page 375.</i>
[N.B. Observe the Byzantine type of the coins of those Emperors who came from Constantinople (Anthemius, Olybrius and Julius Nepos). The coin of Augustulus shows the same type, probably because of Orestes' connection with the East in the days of Attila.]	
Map of the Countries on the Upper Danube, 454-476	<i>„ page 522.</i>

BOOK II.

THE HUNNISH INVASION.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE HUNS.

Authorities.

Guide :—

This chapter is by the necessity of the case a mere compilation from a previous compiler. Our sole guide is M. Deguignes, 'de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Censeur Royal, Interprète du Roi pour les Langues Orientales, et Membre de la Société Royale de Londres,' who published at Paris (1756-8) a 'Histoire Générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mongols, et des autres Tartares Occidentaux, avant et depuis Jésus-Christ jusqu'à present' (4 vols. small 4to; the first vol. being divided into two parts). Only the second part of the first volume (and not the whole of that) is occupied with the history of the Huns properly so called. The fortunes of the different branches of the Turkish and Mongol races fill up the remainder of the work, which might in fact be called 'The History of the Northern Turanians,' though that term was not known to ethnology when Deguignes wrote.

During the period for which we follow his guidance he draws his materials entirely from Chinese historians, whose names are scrupulously quoted. The chief appear to be

BOOK II. KAM-MO, LIE-TAI-KI-SOU, HAN-CHOU, and SSU-KI. As he
 CH. 1.

was one of the first Chinese scholars of his day, and as his work has stood its ground for more than a century as an authority on the history of Central Asia, it is reasonable to presume that no gross inaccuracies have been discovered in his manner of using his Chinese authorities.

At the same time, and although M. Deguignes' great theory as to the origin of the Huns does not appear to have been yet absolutely disproved, it will be prudent to hold it as not much more than a possible hypothesis. The historical student cannot but wish that it were true. There is something fascinating to the imagination in the thought that the inroads of the same people caused the erection of the Great Wall of China and the uprising of Venice from the waters. Any theory also which offers another point of contact, where there are so few, between the Celestial Empire and the history of the Western World, is welcome for its own sake. But all this has nothing to do with proof, and in the present rapidly advancing state of Oriental Philology, we must be prepared at any time to acquiesce in a demonstration by experienced Sinologists that the Huns and the Hiong-nu *cannot* have been the same people.

'THERE is a race on Scythia's verge extreme
 Eastward, beyond the Tanais' chilly stream.
 The Northern Bear looks on no uglier crew:
 Base is their garb, their bodies foul to view;
 Their souls are ne'er subdued to sturdy toil
 Or Ceres' arts: their sustenance is spoil.
 With horrid wounds they gash their brutal brows,
 And o'er their murdered parents bind their vows.
 Not e'en the Centaur-offspring of the Cloud
 Were horsed more firmly than this savage crowd.
 Brisk, lithe, in loose array they first come on,
 Fly, turn, attack the foe who deems them gone.'

CLAUDIAN, In Rufinum, i. 323-331.

Such is the account which the courtier-poet of Rome gave of the Huns half a century before the

name of Attila became a terror to the nations. In the first chapter of the first book we witnessed the effect which the appearance of these wild Tartar hordes produced upon the Gothic warriors. The swarthy faces, without either beard or whisker, the twinkling black eyes, the squat figures, the perfect understanding which seemed to exist between the riders and their little steeds, were there described in the words of the Gothic bishop, Jornandes, and we heard what he had to say concerning their '*execranda origo*,' descended, as he believed them to be, from Gothic sorceresses and from evil spirits.

The German professor of to-day, fair-haired and bearded like his barbarian progenitors, but wearing the spectacles and smoking the pipe of modern civilisation, emerges from his library to gaze at the descendants and representatives of the Huns, and liking them as little as his primeval kinsmen did, brands them with a term of deeper condemnation than Jornandes's epithets of 'witch-born' or 'fiend-begotten'—the terrible name, *Turanian*¹.

The Huns
were Tu-
ranians.

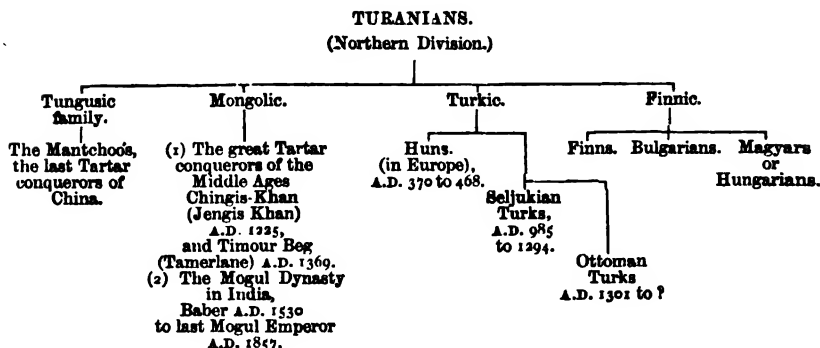
For by thus defining their ethnological position he cuts them off from all connection with the great Aryan stem whose branches have overspread Europe, America, and Australia, Persia, and India; he

¹ It is true that this term, Turanian, seems to be going somewhat out of fashion in ethnological circles, and that it is confessedly a merely conventional designation. But either it or some other similar name will apparently be always required to denote those races in Europe and Asia which are neither Aryan nor Semitic, and which speak what are called 'agglutinative languages.'

BOOK II. equally destroys their claim to share in any of the
 CH. 1. glory of the Semitic races through whose instrumentality Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism were given to the world; and he shuts them up with a multitude of dull barbarians, mighty in destruction, powerless in construction, who have done nothing for the cause of civilisation or human progress, and who, even where they have adopted some of the varnish of modern customs, have remained essentially and incurably barbarous to the present day¹.

Now this Turanian (or, to speak popularly and with less accuracy, Tartar) race which burst upon the
 376. affrighted Goths in the reign of the Emperor Valens,

¹ This statement will be admitted to be *generally* true of all the Turanian tribes. There are however two honourable exceptions, the Finn and the Magyar. The Tartar sovereigns of India and China conformed to the civilised tastes of their subjects, but cannot claim the merit of having originated them. The following is a sketch of the chief *historic* races bearing the Turanian characteristics:—



The Southern Division, comprising races in Tibet and the two Indian peninsulas, we may omit as too distant kinsmen of the Huns, our present subject.

being a people of unlettered nomads, neither cared to give, nor probably could give to the European nations whom they terrified, any information as to their history in the remote past. Some traditions of a mythical kind as to the origin of their race they probably possessed, and had they established themselves in Europe permanently, these might, like the Scandinavian sagas, have floated down into a literary age and been so preserved. But the Huns vanished out of Europe almost as suddenly as they came, leaving no trace behind of their history, their language, or their religion. But for one somewhat disputed source of information, all is dark concerning them. That source is the History of China. If the Huns be the *Hiong-nu*, whose ravages are recorded in that history, then we have a minute account of their doings for centuries before the Christian era, and we know, in fact, far more about them than about the inhabitants of Gaul or Britain before the time of Julius Cæsar: if they are not, our ignorance is complete.

BOOK II.
CH. I.

Proposed
identification
of the
Huns with
the Hiong-
nu of
Chinese
history.

A learned and laborious Frenchman, M. De-guignes, in the middle of last century, conceived the idea that the Huns might be thus identified, and with infinite pains has written out their history from Chinese sources, and has exhibited it in its connection with that of the various Tartar conquerors who, since their day, have poured down upon the civilised kingdoms of Europe and Asia, and wasted them.

This theory
worked out
by De-
guignes.

As before hinted, this identification has been

BOOK II. questioned, and it must be admitted that mere simi-
 CH. 1. larity of name is dangerous ground to build upon
 in the history of barbarous races. But the weight
 of ethnological authority seems to be in favour of
 this hypothesis, and at any rate, the names of De-
 guignes and Gibbon in last century, of Prichard
 and Max Müller in this, are a sufficient justification
 for spending some pages on the history of the
 Hiong-nu, in the belief that we are contemplating
 the formation of that volcano which hurled forth
 Attila.

Physical
 geography
 of Central
 Asia.

From the description which physical geographers
 give of Central Asia, it would surely be one of the
 most striking features of our globe, in the sight of any
 visitor who might be approaching us from another
 sphere. Eastwards from longitude 73° it rises, we
 are told, to the almost incredible average height of
 8000 feet, bearing the character of a vast insulated
 upland, and, its extent and average elevation being
 taken into account, it may be said to form on the
 whole the most considerable projection on the sur-
 face of our planet¹.

From this mighty upraised altar great rivers flow
 down in all directions, the Obi, Yenisei, and Lena
 through Siberia into the Arctic Sea, the Amour and
 the two great rivers of China, the Hoang-ho and
 Yang-tsi-kiang, into the Pacific; the Irawaddy,
 Brahmahpootra, Ganges, Indus, into the Indian
 Ocean; the Oxus and Jaxartes into the Sea of Aral.

¹ Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*,
 iv. 288 (quoting Ritter).

Rivers of its own it has none (or only one, the Yar-
kiang), having apparently no deep valleys: the small
streams which it does possess find their way to
some insignificant inland lake, and are lost there.

Four great mountain chains, limiting or traversing it, run from west to east. The mountains of Altai mark it off from Siberia on the north. The Thian Shan, or Mountains of Heaven, pass across the middle of it at about the 42nd parallel of latitude. The Kuen-Lun fence off what is now Chinese Tartary from Thibet. The Himalayas bound the great plateau to the south.

No mountain chain of any importance appears to intersect the country from north to south till we reach the Bolor Mountains (longitude 73°), which are its western boundary, and which form a kind of step down into the lower, but still lofty plateau (4000 feet high) of Eastern Turkestan.

The dominions of the Hiong-Nu at the time of their greatest supremacy reached over the whole of the northern and central sections of this plateau—from Mount Altai, that is, to the Kuen-Lun. And westwards, their rule extended beyond the Bolor Mountains down into Turkestan, down lower still to the old sea-bed between Lake Aral and the Caspian, nay, even across the Ural Mountains to the Volga. In its more contracted state, their empire still touched the Irtysh (long. 80°) on the west; but it seems to have receded to the Thian-Shan Mountains on the south; and the proper home of the race—if nomads can be said to have a home—was

BOOK 11.

CH. 1.

Extent of
the domin-
ions of the
Hiong-nu.

BOOK II. that district between China and Siberia bounded
 CH. I. on the east by the Inshan Mountains (long. 115°),
 which is marked in modern maps Mongolia. Very
 roughly estimated, it is probably about as large as
 Germany and Austria put together. Across the
 centre of it stretches the great sandy desert of Gobi
 or Shamo.

Here, then, if we may trust our French guide, the nation of the Huns was roaming before the date usually assigned to the Call of Abraham. In winter they crowded down upon the northern frontier of China, which lies in the latitude of Madrid; in summer they drove their cattle northwards, across the great desert of Gobi, and took refuge from the heat in the cool valleys under the mountains which lie to the south of Lake Baikal, and which are in the same latitude as London.

Relation
 of the
 Hiong-nu
 to the early
 dynasties
 of China.

Under the first two historic dynasties of China (the *Hia*, B.C. 2207-1767, and the *Shang*, 1767-1122), the Huns—if it be indeed the same race—are spoken of under the name of Chan-yong (barbarians of the mountains) and Tchong-yo. Their country was called Kuei-fang, 'the country of spirits,' so denominated by the same unchanging nation which at this day calls us Europeans 'foreign devils.'

Chow Dy-
 nasty in
 China,
 B.C. 1122-
 258.

About one hundred years before the building of Solomon's Temple, the *Chow* dynasty ascended the Chinese throne, and slumbered there for nearly nine centuries, till the year 258 B.C. These were the Carolingians of China, monarchs nominally supreme, but really overshadowed and overawed by

their great feudatories ; in their personal character BOOK 11.
CH. 1. debauched and cruel—in short, conspicuous offenders against the golden-mean maxims of morality so dear to the Chinese heart. This cycle of anarchy (it would probably have lasted but a century in Europe) was the harvest-time of the northern barbarians, who are now spoken of as *Hien-yun*. The three northern provinces of the Chinese Empire, Shen-se, Shan-se, and Pe-tche-li (which comprise an area about equivalent to the whole of Great Britain) seem to have been in a state of perpetual border-warfare with these savage enemies, who after each inroad retired laden with booty to the northern portion of their own territory. Their fleet ponies and trackless wildernesses rendered hopeless any attempt on the part of regular troops to pursue or to avenge.

At length, about the middle of the third century B. C. 258. B.C., the long-smouldering light of the Chow dynasty went out, and the Tsin dynasty succeeded. Che-Hwang-te, first Emperor of China, builds the Great Wall to keep out the Hiong-nu. Ching-wang, otherwise Che-Hwang-te¹, the greatest monarch of this new house, the Napoleon of China, united her warring provinces into one compact empire, took the title of *Hwang-te* (universal Emperor) instead of *Wang* (King), which had been borne by all previous monarchs, drove back the *Hiong-nu* (for such is now the name of the barbarians), to their deserts, and finally, about the

¹ Deguignes calls him Chi-hoam-ti ; but I have endeavoured, though at the risk of some inconsistency, to keep the English spelling of these Chinese names. The names of the Hiong-nu princes I have not dared to alter from Deguignes.

BOOK II. time of the Second Punic War, completed the

CH. I.

Great Wall of China (portions of which had been already built by two provincial sovereigns) in order to protect the northern frontier from their incursions. Thus then this great work, 1500 miles long, the name of which has been familiar to all of us from our childhood, was really built to guard the civilisation of Eastern Asia from the inroads of the ancestors of Attila, and might as fairly be called the Huns' Wall as Hadrian's barrier across the Northumbrian isthmus is called by many the Picts' Wall.

His alleged
destruction
of Chinese
historical
books.

Che-Hwang-te in the course of his great career found himself frequently thwarted by the traditions, the etiquette, the state-maxims of the *literati*, who seem to have been even then a powerful class in China. To recur to a former simile, the Napoleonic idea could not be made to accord with the Bourbon tradition. Violently breaking with the Past of his country, he ordered, it is said, that all the books of history which could be found should be destroyed, sparing however those on medicine, agriculture, astrology, and other branches of science.

This strange story may be the invention of national vanity, unable to trace up the written history of China beyond the third century B.C. In this case, all that has been hitherto said as to the early history of China and the Hiong-nu must be relegated to dreamland, for an oral transmission of the events of sixteen centuries may be set aside as an impossibility.

On the other hand, if the story be true, and if BOOK II.
CH. 1. Che-Hwang-te was in the main successful in his onslaught on the works of the earlier historians, it does not follow that Chinese history must necessarily begin with him. For if the Chinese were by this time a literary nation, which the story seems to imply, no mere destruction of books would avail to wipe out from the fully-formed historical consciousness the general outlines of their past national life. Had every roll of manuscript perished out of the world at the time of the Peloponnesian war, the Greeks of that period would still have been able to reconstruct, with sufficient distinctness, by an act of memory, both the mythical and the historical record of previous ages which they had read from their childhood. Considering the apparently early development of the literary character in this enigmatic nation with which we are dealing, one is inclined to conjecture that this is the true view of the subject, and that there is at least some historic value in the Chinese annals previous to the third century B.C.

From this time onwards, at any rate, the chronicle seems to be complete, and full, to the reader's exhaustion, of the doings of the robber-nation, the Titles
among the
Hiong-nu.
The Tanjou
and his
officers. Hiong-nu. These latter had now 'taken to themselves a king after the manner of the nations.' He was called the *Tan-jou*, which we are told is a contraction of the formidable title *Tcem-li-ko-to-tan-jou* (mighty son of Heaven¹). The Tan-jou's

¹ Tan-jou = mighty ; ko-to = son ; Tcem-li = Heaven.

BOOK II. queen was always called Yen-chi. All the great
CH. 1.

commands of the state were filled up in duplicate, one officer for the Right and one for the Left. Characteristically enough, as showing how their faces were ever set towards the fertile and opulent South, the Left with them meant the east and the Right the west. The Left was, as we are informed that it is still with their Tartar nephews at Constantinople, the post of honour ; and thus Hien-wang (which signifies 'wise-king') being the highest grade of office under royalty, the 'Hien-wang of the Left,' or Viceroy of the East, was the next greatest person to the Tan-jou, and the office was generally held by the heir-apparent of that monarch.

Diplomatic
incivilities
between
the Hiong-
nu and the
Chinese.

In their prosperous days the sovereigns of the Hiong-nu trampled upon the civilised and literary pride of the Chinese Emperors with the greater pride of the uncouth barbarian. On tablets, the exact size of which had been prescribed by generations of Masters of the Ceremonies, the Chinese monarch thus wrote with the vermilion pencil, 'The Emperor respectfully begs the Great Tan-jou of the Hiong-nu, &c.' To which, on much larger tablets, the Tan-jou replied, 'The Great Tan-jou of the Hiong-nu, born of the Heavens and the Earth, established by the Sun and Moon, respectfully begs the Emperor of China, &c.'

Frequently an invading Tan-jou would ask for the hand of a Chinese princess as the price of his return to his own land, and the Court, not unwilling

to plant by the side of the robber-king a representation of its own interests, would comply with the request. National vanity however will not allow the Chinese historians to confess that one of the princesses of the blood-royal was really given in marriage to a barbarian, and they accordingly relate that a custom prevailed of adopting for the occasion a female slave into the family of the Emperor, giving her the title of Kum-tcheou, or Princess of the Blood, and then sending her off to be the bride of the Tan-jou. An improbable story doubtless; but what is certain is that the transition from the highly civilised luxurious life of a Chinese palace to the squalor of the Tan-jou's home would be keenly felt by the sufferer, whatever her station in life might be, and perhaps even more by the domestic than by the mistress. Here is the melancholy outpouring in verse of one of these victims of policy, sent indeed not to a king of the Hiong-nu but to a prince of the neighbouring nation, the Ou-sioun, whose mode of life was indistinguishable from theirs:—

BOOK II.
CH. I.

The Tan-jou and their Chinese brides.

'Me to a husband have my kindred tied,
And in a far-off land have bid me bide;
A wretched tent is now my palace-hall,
And a rough paling is its only wall.
Raw flesh must now my hunger satisfy,
And curdled milk, my thirst: nought else have I.
Oh native land! I still must think of thee,
And my heart's wound bleeds ever inwardly.
Why am I not a happy bird of air
To thee, dear home, that I might straight repair!'

BOOK II.

CH. I.

Manners
and cus-
toms of the
Hiong-nu.

The Hiong-nu were ignorant of the art of writing, but the Chinese historians, with a candour which we should scarcely have expected, admit that when they had verbally pledged themselves to a treaty they generally showed strict good faith in the observance of it. The children were early trained in the use of missile weapons. It is said that they were first taught to ride on the wild scampering moorland sheep, and to shoot with their little bows at birds and mice. As boys they hunted hares and foxes, as young men they assumed the weapons of war. They were not deemed full-grown men till they had slain a foe. When they reached old age they fell into poverty and contempt, all the good things being reserved for the active warriors of the nation. Flight was, as hinted in the verses of Claudian, a great part of their strategy. Like the Parthians, they would discharge a cloud of arrows at the pursuing foe, and even if their rapid return failed to throw his ranks into confusion, they easily vanished into the terrible solitudes of those trackless deserts whither for many generations their harassed neighbours feared to pursue them.

Of the two chief residences of the Tan-jous, one appears to have been situated in the north of their dominions, under the continuation of the Altai mountain-range, and near the place which, as the capital of later Tartar chieftains, was known as Karkorum; the other near the Inshan mountains on the eastern frontier, where a large manufactory of bows and arrows was established.

At the first moon of each year there was a general assembly of all the officers of the kingdom and army at the Tan-jou's court, and a solemn sacrifice was then offered up. They met again in the fifth month, and sacrificed to the Heavens, the Earth, and the Spirits of their ancestors. At another assembly held in the autumn they numbered the people and their flocks, thus taking stock, and striking a balance of the profit or loss of the summer's operations in the way of plunder.

BOOK 11.
CH. 1.
Their religious rites.

Every morning the Tan-jou issued from his tent on the left hand of the camp to pay his devotions to the Sun, and in the evening he offered similar adoration to the Moon, presumably during that part of the month only when she was visible. Such was the simple and primitive nature-worship of this tribe. We are informed that one of the other tribes of Central Asia stuck a naked sabre hilt-downwards into the earth, and then gathered round to adore it. It is impossible not to feel some respect for this honest avowal of the worship of Force. More than one great nation of modern Europe secretly worships a piece of field-artillery while professing to place its whole trust and confidence in some completely different Divine Ruler.

The great aim of the Hiong-nu in war was to take as many prisoners as possible. They reduced them, of course, to a state of slavery, and employed them to tend their flocks and herds, that they themselves might be left more free to practise the one art of the barbarian—war. If one of their number

BOOK II. fell in battle, the comrade who succeeded in carry-
 CH. 1.
 B.C. 40. ing off his dead body (as in the Homeric combats) to a place of safety, might claim his inheritance. In the later days of the Hiong-nu empire, when we might have expected that their contact with the Chinese would have exerted some civilising influence upon them, we find the Tanjou Hou-han-sie confirming an oath by drinking blood from the skull of a hostile chief who had been slain by one of his ancestors 130 years before.

Such was the general character of the relations between the Hiong-nu and their southern neighbours. A few striking features of the history of the two nations, selected from a mass of monotonous details, will sufficiently explain the movement which eventually launched the Hunnish nation, not upon Pekin, but upon Rome.

Tsin Dy-
 nasty in
 China,
 B.C. 258-
 207.

In China the Tsin dynasty, founded by the book-destroying Che-Hwang-te, was of short duration, like that of the Buonapartes, to which it has been already compared.

Han Dy-
 nasty,
 B.C. 207-
 A.D. 220.

In the year 207 B.C. another period of anarchy was ended by Kaou-te, who, gathering up again all China under his rule, founded the celebrated *Han* dynasty, which flourished till 220 A.D., or, roughly speaking, from the days of Hannibal to those of Caracalla.

Mé-té-
 Tanjou,
 B.C. 209-
 174.

Contemporaneously with Kaou-te in China, the terrible Mé-té-Tanjou reigned over the Hiong-nu. His father, his step-mother, his half-brother, all atoned to him with their lives for an abortive at-

tempt to exclude him from the succession. Yet, BOOK II.
fierce as he had shown himself against his own flesh CH. I.
and blood, he appeared to submit with patience to B.C.
the accumulated insults of the Sien-pi, a nation 209-174.
perhaps of Tungusic origin on the east of his dominions. Me-té had in his stables a horse of fabulous speed and endurance, which could travel, it was said, 150 miles in one day. The Sien-pi sent to ask for this horse; he gave it up to them. Emboldened by this act of submission, they demanded one of his wives; she was sent to their king's tent. Then came a requisition for some waste lands, on a disputed frontier between the two nations, and at last the pent-up rage of Me-té burst forth, 'Whatever touched my own honour or profit I have given up for the sake of peace, but of the land of my people I will not surrender to you a foot's-breadth.' And he smote the people of the Sien-pi with a great destruction, and pursued them till they took refuge in the mountains of In-shan, where they remained a crippled and enfeebled remnant, but ever brooding over their wrongs, till, after the lapse of nearly three centuries, they sallied forth to enjoy their long-delayed vengeance.

Towards China, Me-té assumed an attitude of Me-té's
permanent hostility. He fixed his court at Ta-tum- Wars with
fou, or Tai-tong, just south of the Great Wall, and China.
pushed forward his Hien-wang of the Left as far as Changkow, and him of the Right to Yen-gan, both apparently from 100 to 200 miles within the Chinese frontier.

BOOK II.

CH. I.

B.C.

209-174.

The Emperor Kaou-te levied an army of 320,000 men and marched against him, but was out-manœuvred, and shut up in a fortress near Ta-tum-fou, where for seven days his army was left without provisions. By the favour of the Tanjou's wife he escaped from this perilous position ; but those seven days of semi-starvation were long remembered by the sleek Chinese troops. Peace of some sort was patched up between the two powers, but after the death of Kaou-te an audacious Hien-wang of the Right pushed his inroads so far that his barbarian hordes came almost within sight of Sin-gan-fou (in the province of Shen-si), which was then the capital of the empire. The Chinese Court complained, and the Tanjou sent his too zealous Viceroy of the West on a tour of conquest through Central Asia. Thibet, all that we now call Eastern and Western Turk-estan, and part of Siberia, were made subject to Me-té's domination, and it is even said that the conquering Hiong-nu reached on this occasion as far as the Volga itself. With a great show of courtesy, the Tanjou sent an embassy to inform the Chinese Emperor of these conquests, by which he had become the greatest potentate in Asia ; and hereupon, after a copious exchange of compliments, the Emperor, we are informed, concluded to accord to him a renewal of the treaty of peace. As it is clear that at this time China was almost helpless in the hands of her barbarian foe, the Tanjou's humble supplications for peace, and the gracious concession of it by the Emperor, were probably recorded by the literati

of that day, the contemporaries of Hannibal, with BOOK II.
 about as much accuracy as may be evinced by some CH. 1.
 Chinese historian, upon whom in our own day may
 have devolved the duty of chronicling the destruc- A.D. 1860.
 tion of the Summer Palace, and the treaty graciously
 conceded to El-gin and Mon-to-ban.

From the death of Me-té-Tanjou, which occurred Endless wars and negotiations between China and the Hiong-nu.
 B.C. 174, we have, for the space of 260 years, a his-
 tory of the wars of China and the Huns, almost as
 detailed and circumstantial as the records of Roman
 conquest during the same period. Happily for the
 reader there is no necessity to reproduce these de- B.C. 174- A.D. 93.
 tails here. The same kind of events repeat them-
 selves with monotonous regularity. 'The Tanjou
 sought for peace from the Chinese Emperor. A wife
 was sent to him, and presents were exchanged. The
 Hiong-nu at once recommenced their inroads and
 ravaged a great belt of country in the three pro-
 vinces of Shen-se, Shan-se, and Petcheli. The Em-
 peror sent three armies, amounting to 200,000 men,
 into the country of the Hiong-nu. Two of the ge-
 nerals obtained great successes, the third lost all his
 men in a march through the desert. He ought to
 have returned to China, and there submitted to
 degradation from all his posts of honour, and after-
 wards committed suicide. But he preferred to take
 refuge at the Court of the Tanjou, where the in-
 formation which he gave as to the movements of the
 troops and the strength of the frontier-cities proved
 extremely injurious to the interests of China. The
 Tanjou now supplicated for peace; rich presents were

BOOK II. exchanged, and various complimentary speeches
 CH. 1. were made, but both parties understood that there was no reality in the peace thus arranged. A Chinese princess was sent as a wife for the heir-apparent, the Hien-wang of the Left. The Hiong-nu recommenced their invasions of the three provinces of Shen-se, Shan-se, and Petcheli, and so on as before.

The barbarian power declines.

Long and prosperous reign of the Chinese Emperor Woo-te.

There was however during all this period a pretty steady decline of the power of the barbarians, and an equally steady increase in that of their civilised neighbours. Especially note-worthy in this respect was the long reign of the great Emperor *Woo-te*, which lasted from B.C. 140-86, or, shall we say, from the time of Cato the Censor to that of Cicero. This monarch *Woo-te*, whose victorious arms extended to Pegu, Siam, and Bengal, and who was a zealous patron of the morality of Confucius, was contemporary with seven successive Tanjous, and, but that his prosperity did not desert him at the end of his reign, he might, not inaptly, be called the Louis XIV of China.

The lives of three of his servants may be briefly noticed here for the sake of the light which they throw on the history of the Hiong-nu.

B.C.
138-126.
Mission of
Chang-kiao.

Chang-kiao was instructed by his master to establish communications with the Yue-ché, a Tartar people whom the Hiong-nu had driven from the east to the west of Central Asia, and who had now established themselves in great force between the Oxus and Jaxartes, and even within the confines of the

present Persian kingdom. Chang-kiao was made prisoner by the Hiong-nu while seeking to pass through their country in disguise. After ten years of captivity he escaped, reached the country of the Yue-ché (the modern Khorassan), remained there some time, storing up a large amount of valuable political information, and returned by way of Thibet, but even so was unable to escape from the Hiong-nu. His second captivity however was of short duration. Under cover of the troubles of a disputed succession, he again made his escape, and after an absence of twelve years, returned to his master's court.

Li-kwang-li, one of the bravest of the Chinese officers, was for sixty years perpetually giving and receiving hard blows in the wars with the northern barbarians. They themselves so highly esteemed the skill and rapidity of his movements that they called him 'the Winged General.' Once, it is said, at the head of 100 horsemen, he put a large body of their cavalry to flight. Yet even he, after a defeat, had to endure the systematic ingratitude of his countrymen, and after counterfeiting death on the field of battle, was on the point of receiving it at the hands of the executioner. He was permitted, however, to redeem his life by the payment of a large sum of money, but was degraded from all his dignities. But in the very next year the Emperor found himself compelled to restore him to the chief military command, so pressing was the danger from the northern invaders.

In the decline of life, this veteran soldier had the

BOOK 11.

CH. 1.

B.C.

144-85.

Hard fate
of the
veteran
*Li-kwang-
li.*

B.C. 99.

BOOK II. misfortune to see the honour of his family tarnished
CH. 1. by the treason of his grandson Ling, one of the
B.C.
140-86. many Chinese generals who after defeat fled to the
Court of the Tanjou, and sold their knowledge of
the strategic combinations of their countrymen for
honours and offices in the barbarian court.

About twelve years later, the brave old general, who must now have been fully eighty years of age, again headed a grand attack upon the Hiong-nu. He met at first with complete success, and pushed the foe before him to the mountain-barrier at the extreme north of their dominions. The forced marches, however, across the terrible desert of Gobi had too much weakened his troops. The Tanjou brought 50,000 fresh men into the field, dug in the night a deep ditch in the rear of the Chinese forces, and thus added to the disorder and panic of their flight after the defeat of the morrow.

Li-kwang-li was compelled to surrender at discretion, and taken prisoner to the Court of the Tanjou, who treated him with such marked favour (partly, perhaps, on account of his relationship to the already exiled Ling) that all the barbarian officers became jealous of his predominating influence. Superstition was enlisted on the side of envy; in a dangerous illness of the Queen-mother, the soothsayers declared that the gods of the Hiong-nu were offended because they received no more human sacrifices as of yore, but prisoners of war were now preserved alive, and even received into favour. Li-kwang-li was seized and sacrificed; a terrible suc-

cession of snow-storms followed, which destroyed a vast number of cattle, and prevented the seeds from germinating in the earth. Then they changed their minds and said that they had mistaken the will of the gods ; but the fine old warrior, after his sixty years of battle, was beyond the reach of their repentance.

Woo-soo was sent by the Emperor Woo-te upon one of those endless embassies for the arrangement of 'a lasting and honourable peace,' which vary with their monotony of fraud the monotony of bloodshed. In the course of the discussions on this subject, he addressed himself to one of the Chinese fugitives, who had been promoted to a subordinate kingship in Western Siberia, and reproached him so bitterly for his treason and want of patriotism, that the Tanjou, disregarding the sanctity of an ambassador's person, seized him and cast him into a ditch. There he lived for several days, exposed to all the rigour of the climate, and feeding only upon snow and the offal of the camp. The barbarians conceived that there must be something divine in the nature of a man who could endure such hardships, but they chose a singular means of testifying their admiration. They carried him off to the inhospitable shores of Lake Baikal, in the east of Siberia, where he dragged out life for nineteen years, his food being mice and the bitter fruits of the desert. Some of his countrymen, deserters, tried to reconcile him to his lot, and to persuade him to accept, as they had done, the bounty of the barbarian. 'No,' said he, 'I will remain true

BOOK II.
CH. I.

B.C.
140-86.

B.C. 99.
The Ambassador
Woo-soo
ill-treated
by the
barbarians.

BOOK II. to my country, whatever tortures her enemies may
 CH. 1. inflict upon me. A minister owes to his king the
 B C.
 140-86. same affectionate duty which a child does to his
 parent.' And when he heard of the death of his
 master, the great Woo-te, he turned his face to the
 beloved South, looked towards China, and burst into
 tears. The remorse which the Tanjou felt for the
 death of Li-kwang-li turned out beneficially for
 Woo-soo, who, after his weary captivity, was at
 length restored to his country.

The Hiong-
 nu position
 turned by
 Chinese
 alliances in
 Central
 Asia.

In the early days of the conquering Tanjous, Thibet appears to have felt their influence, and the whole of Eastern Turkestan (or what Deguignes calls 'Little Bukharia') seems to have been in complete dependence upon them. Even then, however, for some reason which is not explained, but which is probably connected with the physical geography of the country, their invasions of China were always made on the north, never on the west frontier. If they thus missed an opportunity of taking their enemy in flank, he, when his turn of superiority came, showed more skilful strategy; and the great triumph of the reign of Woo-te was the series of conquests and alliances by which he turned the south-west flank of the Hiong-nu position.

Any one who now looks at the map of Asia will see a long thin slice of territory stretching forth at the north-western angle of China (from the Hoang-ho to Su-chow, long. 98°). This is ground won from the barbarians, and made strong by the Chinese monarchs for the defence of the Empire. It is, in

fact, an arm stretched forth into the desert, by which China seems to say, 'Not this way, barbarians of the North! fight, if you will fight, fairly, face to face; but you shall not come round to my left side, and there deal me stealthily an assassin's blow.'

After this conquest came the secret mission of Chang-kiao through Thibet, to the country between the Oxus and Jaxartes, and this produced immense results. Where the stealthy emissary had gone, victorious armies followed. Khotan, Yarkand, Kashgar accepted the alliance, or became the subjects of the Chinese Emperor. The Ou-sioun, a powerful people, kindred with but hostile to the Hiong-nu, and dwelling to the south of Lake Balkhash, were encouraged to lean on China for protection against the common intervening foe: and a Chinese governor was permanently established at Aksou, under the steepes of the Tien Shan (about 78° long. and 42° lat.).

It was not without some protest from the timid conservatism of the Chinese ministers that this energetic policy was pursued. When Siven-ti, the great-grandson of Woo-te, was meditating an expedition, half-hostile, half-friendly, to the country of the Ouigours (near Turfan, long. 89°) he was met by the outspoken remonstrances of a wise old counsellor named Goei-siang. This sage appears not to have been perplexed by any of those difficulties as to the triumph of injustice and the downfall of the good which have troubled the sages and seers of other nations.

BOOK II.
CH. I.

B.C. 66.
A Chinese
Cabinet-
Council.

BOOK II.

CH. 1.

B.C. 66.

Wars

Classified.

‘There are five sorts of wars,’ said he. ‘The first, for the suppression of civil tumult. This is a war of Justice, and it is sure to be successful. The second, in which you oppose a foreign invader, is a war of Necessity, and is generally crowned with victory. In the third kind of war, one of Rage and Fury, in which men take up arms about mere trifles, one is often beaten. To invade the lands of others for the sake of spoil is the fourth species of war, that of Avarice, and in this success is not to be expected. But when a monarch fights only in order to acquire glory, to render his family illustrious and become a terror to his neighbours, that is a war of Ambition and Pride, the results of which are uniformly disastrous. These five points are so many maxims founded on the dealings of Heaven. At present the Hiong-nu desire peace, while our own internal condition is far from satisfactory. It is no rare occurrence to see a son murder his father, a younger brother the elder, a wife her husband. Twenty-two crimes of this kind have occurred in the course of the past year. We ought to apply a remedy to these social disorders instead of carrying war into the country of our neighbours.’

Rapid decline of the power of the Hiong-nu.

Notwithstanding these excellent remarks, the policy of war and annexation prevailed. The Ouirgours became tributary, and the Hiong-nu felt the predominant influence of China all round their southern and western frontiers. The barbarians saw that their Empire was departing from them, and fell into confusion and anarchy. In the year

58 B.C. five Tanjous were warring against one another. Hou-han-sie, apparently the rightful heir, at length emerged from the contest, sole Tanjou ; but, almost immediately after, had to enter upon a new and fiercer contest with two fresh competitors, one of them his own brother. The upshot of the whole business was, that he humbly presented himself at the court of the Chinese Emperor, promised subjection and tribute, and received from this hereditary enemy assistance which at length enabled him to reign without a rival¹.

In a feeble and crippled state, the Hiong-nu Empire lasted on for a century and a half from this time, but never again as the equal foe, generally as

BOOK II.
CH. 1.
B.C. 58.

B.C. 58-
A.D. 93.

¹ On the death of Hou-han-sie, B.C. 31, a generous rivalry took place between his children, which should *not* succeed him. Besides other wives he had married two sisters, daughters of his Prime Minister. The elder sister, chief in rank, had the younger children, and this led to a discussion whether the dignity of the mother or the age of the children ought to be most regarded. Eventually all the four sons in question succeeded, first the two elder by the inferior wife, and then the two younger by the chief consort. Their regal names were as follows, and as they are a fair type of their class, the reader will perceive the reason for so often speaking of the Tanjou by his title and not quoting his name.

1. Feou-tchou-loui-jo-ti (Jo-ti = the Greek Philopator).
2. Seou-hiai-jo-ti.
3. Tche-ya-jo-ti.
4. Ou-tchou-lieou-jo-ti.

In course of time two more sons of Hou-han-sie succeeded to the throne,

5. Ou-loui-jo-ti and
6. Hou-tou-ulh-chi-tao-jo-ti.

It is perhaps an unworthy Aryan prejudice which finds a certain amount of uncouthness in these Turanian names.

BOOK II. the vassal, occasionally as the revolted subject of
 CH. I. the Court of China.

A.D. 46.
 Separation
 between
 Northern
 and
 Southern
 Hiong-nu.

About the middle of the first century after Christ, the nation became finally divided into two hostile sections—a northern and a southern. Doubtless the dwellers in the immediate neighbourhood of China became more dependent on the good things which accompany civilisation than the wild nomads of the north-west; and then the physical barrier of the great desert of Gobi would probably intensify and perpetuate the moral division. From this time forwards the Tanjou of the south becomes one of the most eager enemies of the northern kingdom, ever besieging the ear of the Chinese Emperor with the cry, ‘Rase it, rase it, even to the foundations thereof.’

Vengeance
 of the
 Sien-pi.

At the same time a new enemy pressed upon them from the east. The neighbouring tribe of the Sien-pi whom the great Tanjou Meté had cooped up in the mountains of what is now called Mantchuria, after brooding for three centuries over their wrongs, now found the longed-for opportunity of vengeance. After forty years of more or less constant warfare with this triple league of foes, symptoms of dissolution began to show themselves in the northern kingdom. Vast hordes of the Hiong-nu, in one case amounting to a quarter of a million of fighting men, went over bodily to the Chinese. A terrible famine, the work of some locust-like insect, then wasted the country. A combined invasion of the Chinese and the south-

ern Hiong-nu on a large scale took place in the year 89. The Chinese general, Teou-hien, put the Tanjou to flight, and having advanced 1000 miles into his kingdom, left upon one of the mountain ranges an inscription composed by the historiographer who accompanied the expedition, recording the success of his arms. In two years however even this effort was surpassed: the Chinese troops reached the Irtisch, the western frontier of the dominions of the Hiong-nu, the Tanjou had again to take shelter in some Siberian desert, and his mother was taken prisoner.

Teou-hien, though victorious, recommended his imperial master to spare his fallen foes. But on his death sterner counsels prevailed. A new Tanjou who had been raised to the throne was driven into revolt, a revolt hopeless from the first. He himself fell into the hands of the Chinese forces, and was beheaded. The Sien-pi poured into the defenceless country like a torrent. Great multitudes of the Hiong-nu consented to pass under their yoke and bear their name, the rest fled westwards across the Irtisch, settling by the Ural River and near the modern Russian Government of Orenbourg. Thus did the great barbarian empire, which for 2000 years had been measuring its forces against the civilisation of China, fall, with apparently irretrievable ruin.

All this occurred in the reign of Domitian. It was not till nearly three centuries later that the Huns, during the reign of Valens, crossed the Sea

BOOK II.
CH. I.
A.D. 89.

Fall of the
Hiong-nu
Empire.
A.D. 93.

Hunnish
invasion
three cen-
turies after
these
events.

BOOK II. of Azof or the stream of the Volga, and fell upon the
 CR. 1. affrighted and disgusted Gothic subjects of King
 376. Hermanric. This long interval of quiescence and
 of obscurity is the weak place in the identification
 of the Hiong-nu and the Huns. It is impossible
 not to feel that many changes might have occurred
 during that time, and that mere similarity of name is
 a slight clue by which to traverse so vast a distance.

Doubtful
 benefit to
 China from
 its victories
 over the
 Hiong-nu.

The Chinese historians necessarily give during
 this interval far scantier information than pre-
 viously as to the affairs of Central Asia. The ex-
 pulsion of the northern Hiong-nu appears to have
 been a 'victory of Pyrrhus' for the Chinese Em-
 pire. The southern Hiong-nu and the Sien-pi,
 under various barbarous names, formed settlements
 within its limits and erected dynasties which dis-
 puted the throne of China itself with its native
 princes. In such a state of things the historians
 of that country had but little inducement or
 opportunity to record the revolutions of Western
 Asia. We are enabled however, dimly and at long
 intervals, to trace the continued existence of a
 Hiong-nu people along the line of the Volga and
 the northern shores of the Caspian.

Chinese
 description
 of a great
 civilized
 state on
 the West
 frontier of
 Asia.

Deguignes,
 vol. I,
 pt. ii, p.
 lxxviii.

To the west of them, but separated by one fierce
 Tartar people, the Chinese historians placed the great
 kingdom of Ta-Tsin. Their description of this king-
 dom is so curious that a few of its leading features
 may be here inserted. 'It is a country of large
 extent with many dependent kingdoms. The walls
 are built of stone ; inns are placed along the lines

of road. All sorts of trees and plants are found there. The inhabitants are given to agriculture, and even understand how to keep silkworms. They cut their hair and wear very fine clothes. They have all sorts of chariots with white coverings: in war they have drums, flags, and tents. The capital is thirty (perhaps fifteen) miles in circumference; it contains five palaces by the waterside, supported on pillars. Every day the king goes to one or other of these palaces to administer justice. Before his chariot walks an officer holding an open bag in which are placed the petitions of all who present themselves, which are examined by the king when he enters the palace. Thirty-six generals of the army form a Council of State to deliberate on the affairs of the Empire. The king does not always hold his office for life; they generally endeavour to choose a wise man, but should any extraordinary calamity occur, for instance any great whirlwind or inundation, they change their ruler, and he who is thus deposed appears to descend into private life without a sigh.

BOOK II.
CH. I.
A.D. 170.

‘Gold, silver, precious stones, rich and beautifully embroidered vestments abound in this country. They have both gold and silver money: ten pieces of the latter are equivalent to one of the former. They trade both with the Parthians and Indians. They have often endeavoured to enter into direct commercial relations with China, but have always been prevented by the Parthians. Recently’ [in the year corresponding to A.D. 166]

BOOK II. 'the king of the Ta-Tsin named Gan-tun succeeded in sending ambassadors, who were followed by merchants, to China by way of India. The inhabitants of Ta-Tsin are tall and well-made like the Chinese, whence their name' [Ta = Great: Tsin = China or the Chinese]. This last sentence will probably have disclosed to the reader the real name of the country in question. Only the Romans of that day could be considered worthy of being called by a Chinese historian 'Great as the Chinese.' He has been reading a description of *Imperium Romanum* by a Chinese pen, and the king, Gan-tun, is the Emperor Marcus (Aurelius) *Antoninus*.

Why did the Huns linger for three hundred years before invading Europe?

The question will naturally be asked, 'Why, if these Hiong-nu, marauders as they were by nature, had wandered so near to the confines of this alluring kingdom of Ta-Tsin, did they allow three centuries to elapse before they commenced their invasions of that empire?' Dimly and vaguely, through the faint twilight of their history, we may conjecture the following reasons for their quiescence: there may have been a hundred others which are to us undiscoverable.

They might still hope to revenge themselves on China.

First, their eyes were still turned eastwards; their expeditions still sometimes reached as far as Khamil (long. 95° E.), and for generations they seem to have cherished the hope of once more ravaging the valley of the Hoang-ho. At length their old enemies, the Sien-pi, under the dynasty of the Topas, built up, in the old country of the Hiong-nu,

A.D.
261-376.

a sufficiently solid empire to check all eastward incursions on their part. But,

BOOK II.
CH. I.

Secondly, between their new home and western civilization a strong barrier was presented by the fierce nation of the Alani, Turanian nomads like themselves, who, under the name of Alanna, are spoken of by the Chinese historians as occupying the country of Yen-Tcai, the extensive district which is bounded by the Volga on the north, the Caucasus on the south, the Sea of Azof and the Don on the west, and the Caspian and Volga on the east. These are the people who for so many generations adored a naked sabre stuck into the earth as their only divinity. They were at length, after contests the duration and severity of which are hidden from us, overcome by those neighbours of theirs whom we may now without fear of contradiction venture to call the Huns. Some, the Alani of the Don, became amalgamated with the armies of the conqueror, others fled westwards and bore a part, recognised in history, in the subversion of the Roman Empire, though it did not fall to their lot to found any enduring kingdom within its borders.

The Alani
were
between
them and
Europe.

Hopes of Chinese spoil on the east, the reality of Alan resistance on the west, were doubtless two reasons for the long tarriance of the Hiong-nu eastwards of the Volga. A third, which it is sufficient merely to indicate, is the prestige, slowly and with difficulty impaired, of the Roman Empire, of that 'Ta-Tsin' which 'Gantun' and his immediate

Prestige
of the
Roman
Empire.

BOOK II. predecessors had ruled so wisely and made so
CH. 1. strong.

Dispirited
 condition
 of the
 Hiong-nu.

A fourth is the utterly broken and dispirited state of the Hiong-nu themselves. After their flight from their old home in Central Asia, they seem to have ceased to elect Tanjous ; the unity of the nation was gone, the degree of organisation, the semblance of a polity which they had before possessed, probably vanished. Removed from the civilizing influences of contact with China they doubtless sank lower and lower into mere squalid savagery, a loosely united bundle of roving hordes, until at length increase of numbers brought with it confidence, the remembrance of past supremacy stirred up shame at their present abject condition, the success of their conflict with the Alans assured them of victory, and turning their backs definitively on the East, they crossed the Cimmerian Bosphorus—whether guided by a demon-stag or not we need not inquire—to work, both directly and indirectly, more ruin and greater changes in the fair kingdoms of Ta-Tsin than their mightiest Tanjous had ever done in the often-wasted provinces of the real China.

Am-
 mi-
 anus's
 description
 of the
 Huns.

This chapter was commenced by Claudian's poetical description of the Huns ; at its close let us listen to the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, a soldier, and more strictly a contemporary, describing in what guise they showed themselves when first 1500 years ago, they burst upon Europe.

'The nation of the Huns, little known to ancient

records, but spreading from the marshes of Azof to BOOK II.
the Icy Sea, surpasses all other barbarians in wild- CH. 1.
ness of life. In the first days of infancy, deep incisions are made in the cheeks of their boys, in order that, when the time comes for whiskers to grow there, the sprouting hairs may be kept back by the furrowed scars: and hence they grow to maturity and to old age beardless as eunuchs. They all, however, have strong and well-knit limbs and fine necks. Yet they are of portentous ugliness and so crook-backed that you would take them for some sort of two-footed beasts, or for the roughly-chipped stakes which one sees used for the railings of a bridge. And though they do just bear the likeness of men (of a very ugly pattern), they are so little advanced in civilization that they make no use of fire, nor of any kind of relish, in the preparation of their food, but feed upon the roots which they find in the fields, and the half-raw flesh of any sort of animal. I say half-raw, because they give it a kind of cooking by placing it between their own thighs and the backs of their horses. / They never seek the shelter of houses, which they look upon as little better than tombs, and will only enter upon the direst necessity; nor would one be able to find among them even a cottage of wattled rushes: but wandering at large over mountain and through forest, they are trained to bear from their infancy all the extremes of cold, of hunger, and of thirst.

‘They are clad in linen raiment, or in the skins of field-mice sewn together, and the same suit serves

BOOK II. them for use in-doors and out. However dingy the
CH. 1. colour of it may become, the tunic which has once been hung round their necks is never laid aside nor changed till through long decay the rags of it will no longer hold together. Their heads are covered with bent caps, their hairy legs with the skins of goats ; their shoes, never having been fashioned on a last, are so clumsy that they cannot walk comfortably.

‘On this account they are not well adapted to pedestrian encounters ; but then on the other hand they are almost welded to their horses, which are hardy, though of ugly shape, and on which they sometimes ride women’s fashion. On horseback every man of that nation lives night and day ; on horseback he buys and sells ; on horseback he takes his meat and drink, and when night comes he leans forward upon the narrow neck of his horse and there falls into a deep sleep, or wanders into the varied phantasies of dreams.

‘When a discussion arises upon any matter of importance they come on horseback to the place of meeting. No kingly sternness overawes their deliberations, but being upon the whole well-contented with the disorderly guidance of their chiefs, they do not scruple to interrupt the debates with anything that comes into their heads.

‘When attacked, they will sometimes engage in regular battle. Then, going into the fight in order of columns, they fill the air with varied and discordant cries. More often, however, they fight in

no regular order of battle, but being extremely swift and sudden in their movements, they disperse, and then rapidly come together again in loose array, spread havock over vast plains, and flying over the rampart, they pillage the camp of their enemy almost before he has become aware of their approach. It must be owned that they are the nimblest of warriors; the missile weapons which they use at a distance being pointed with sharpened bones admirably fastened to the shaft: when in close combat, they fight without regard to their own safety, and while their enemy is intent upon parrying the thrusts of their swords, they throw a net over him and so entangle his limbs that he loses all power of walking or riding.

BOOK II.

CH. I.

'Not one among them cultivates the ground, or ever touches a plough-handle. All wander abroad without fixed abodes, without home, or law, or settled customs, like perpetual fugitives, with their waggons for their only habitations, in which their wives weave their foul garments, and bring forth children, and rear them up to the age of puberty¹. If you ask them, not one can tell you what is his place of origin; he was conceived in one place, born in another, educated perhaps in some yet more distant one. They are great truce-breakers, fickle, always ready to be swayed by the first breath of a new desire, abandoning themselves without restraint to the most ungovernable rage.

¹ The squalid prototype of the gorgeous Harem of the Ottomans.

BOOK II. 'Finally, like animals devoid of reason, they are
CH. I. utterly ignorant of what is seemly and what is not ;
they are tricksters with words, and full of dark
sayings ; they are never moved by either religious
or superstitious awe ; they burn with unquenchable
thirst for gold, and they are so changeable and so
easily moved to wrath, that many times in the day
they will quarrel with their comrades on no pro-
vocation, and be reconciled having received no
satisfaction.'

CHAPTER II.

ATTILA AND THE COURT OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

Authorities.

Sources :—

PRISCUS, born at Panium, a town of Thrace, probably about the beginning of the fifth century. He wrote (in Greek) a history in eight books, 'Of Byzantium and the occurrences connected with Attila,' which apparently narrated the events between 433 and 474. He is commonly spoken of as 'the Rhetorician,' or 'the Sophist,' and his pure, elegant, and lively style agrees with the supposition that he was by profession a man of letters. He was admitted to the intimate friendship of Maximin, one of the generals of Theodosius II, whom he accompanied on his celebrated embassy to Attila, and also on a visit to Syria. There is some reason for thinking that both he and his friend Maximin were Pagans. Only fragments of his work remain, but one of these, of considerable length, describing Attila and his court and the reception of the Roman ambassadors, is the most interesting piece of contemporary history which the fifth century has bequeathed to us.

Guides¹ :—

Deguignes, *Histoire des Huns*, Liv. iv, § 1, *Les Huns Occidentaux* (a most convenient summary of all the passages in Greek and Latin authors bearing on the history of Attila). The same may be said of

Mascou, *History of the Ancient Germans* (translated from the German 1738), Book ix.

Amédée Thierry's *Histoire d'Attila* (2 vols.) is a well-constructed narrative, with which the relation of the embassy of Priscus is skilfully interwoven.

¹ This enumeration of guides applies to all the remaining chapters of the Second Book.

BOOK II. 'Attila, King of the Huns,' by the Hon. and Rev. W. Herbert (London, 1838), is an Epic Poem in twelve books on the career of Attila from his defeat on the Catalaunian Plains (451) till his death (454). The full title of the work is 'Attila, or the Triumph of Christianity,' and preternatural machinery, both celestial and infernal, is supplied on a liberal scale. The poetry is evidently very fine, but I have not succeeded in reading more than one out of the twelve books. The most useful part of the book to a historical student is the second half of it, 'Attila and his Predecessors, an Historical Treatise.' Here all the materials for writing the life of Attila are collected with great industry, but there is no sufficient separation between the precious and the vile. The contemporary Priscus, who drank wine with Attila, appears to be quoted with no more deference than is paid to Hungarian and Italian romancers.

The Huns
do not at
once come
in contact
with Rome.

FOR half a century after the irruption of the Huns into Dacia, they exercise but little direct influence, on the course of Roman history. Occasionally they made a predatory inroad into the Empire, as, for instance, in the year 396, when, at the instigation, it was said, of the prime minister Rufinus, they moved southwards from Caucasus upon Armenia, and pressed on through Cappadocia and Cilicia, until

'The pleasant fields of Syria waste were laid,
And hostile chargers trampled down the glade
Of soft Orontes, to her children's dance
And song more used than War's dread dissonance!'

Uldis.

And thirteen years later, under the guidance of a chief named *Uldis*², they crossed the Danube and

¹ Claudian, In Rufinum, ii. 32-35.

² Perhaps the same person as Uldin, Stilicho's Hunnish auxiliary in the campaign against Radagaisus (405).

penetrated far into Bulgaria. When the Prefect of Thrace sought humbly for peace, Uldis proudly pointed to the sun and said, 'All that *he* shines upon I can conquer if I will.' But in the midst of his boastings his power was undermined: the imperial emissaries were at work among his troops, contrasting the hard life of a Hunnish marauder with the ease and the dignity of a stipendiary of Rome. So large a part of his army yielded to these suggestions that Uldis was obliged to fly, and escaped but with life to the Dacian shore.

Upon the whole, during this period, while their enemies the Visigoths and other Teutonic tribes were still hovering about the Danube and the eastern ranges of the Alps, the attitude of the Huns seems to have been more often friendly than hostile to the Romans, in whose armies we saw them serving when Honorius decreed the overthrow of Stilicho, and when Aetius came too late to the succour of Joannes against Placidia.

And, mere barbarians as they remained to the end of their history, it is easy to see that this half-century of intercourse with Rome had taught them some few of the needs and enjoyments of civilized life. The whole character of Attila's court and camp was sensual, but the sensuality was by many degrees less squalid and less disgusting than that of the men who first crossed the Sea of Azof, and whose habits were described by Ammianus.

Doubtless it was the interposition of the Teutonic nations which, during this half-century, prevented

BOOK II.
CH. 2.

409.

Huns as
Roman
auxiliaries.

They
become
slightly
less savage.

BOOK II. the Huns from coming to close quarters with the
 CH. 2. Roman power. After the Visigoths, the Vandals,
 432. and the Suevi had settled in Spain, the Alani in
 Gaul, the Burgundians in that province which yet
 bears their name, the Huns, having only the Danube
 and the Alps between them and the Empire, began
 to make the two Augusti, but especially him of
 Constantinople, feel their heavy hand.

King Roua
 and the
 Hunnish
 fugitives.

In 432 we find a certain *Roua* or *Rugula* reigning over the Huns, and receiving from Theodosius II an annual payment, which might be called either subsidy or tribute, of 350 pounds weight of gold (£14,000 sterling). Finding that the Romans had dared to make alliances with some barbarous tribes, dwellers by the Danube, whom he claimed as his subjects, Roua in great wrath declared that all *his* treaties with Rome should be at once made null and void unless the Emperor renounced his alliance with these nations. Another question of a more personal nature also arose now, if it had not arisen before, and was the subject of ceaseless negotiation for the next seventeen years. Many deserters had fled from the harsh yoke of Roua, and taken shelter on Roman territory. The demand was made, and was pressed home with every circumstance of insult upon the trembling Theodosius, 'Restore to me my fugitives.' Imagine such a request having been hinted, ever so courteously, to any Roman magistrate who in the old days sat upon the curule chair, with his lictors and fasces round him. Had it not been better for the omnipotent Mistress of the Nations

to have died rather than live on to endure such degradation? BOOK II.
Ch. 2.

But Theodosius, who was a meek man and an excellent illuminator of manuscripts, if not a born king of men, was preparing to send an embassy to mitigate the wrath of Roua, when tidings arrived that he was dead, and that the kingdom of the Huns had devolved upon his two nephews, sons of his brother Mundzuk, men in the vigour of early manhood, named *Attila* and *Bleda*. 433.
Accession
of Attila
and Bleda.

It was in the year 433 that the two brothers ascended the throne. Bleda is to us the mere shadow of a name, but it is far otherwise with Attila.

It is almost needless to say that no coin, or picture, or bust remains to bring before us the lineaments of the terrible savage. Yet he seems almost to live again in the pages of Jornandes and Priscus. We see him short of stature, with the small, bead-like eyes, and snub nose and swarthy skin of his Tartar ancestors, yet with a haughty step, and a fierce way of darting his glances hither and thither, as though he felt himself lord of all, and were perpetually asking of the by-standers, 'Who is he that shall deliver you out of my hand?' He had a broad and well-formed chest and a large head, a scanty beard, like most of the Tartar race, and his hair was early sprinkled with white. Attila's
appear-
ance

Few men that ever lived have had such a power of inspiring fear in the minds both of their subjects and their enemies as this Turanian chieftain. Enthusiasm, loyalty, gratitude, these were not the and cha-
racter.

BOOK II. motives by which he swayed mankind, but the
CH. 2. amount of abject, slavish fear which this little
 swarthy Kalmuck succeeded in instilling into mil-
 lions of human hearts is not to be easily matched
 in the history of our race.

Whether he had much military talent may be doubted, since the only great battle in which he figured was a complete defeat. The impression left upon us by what history records of him is that of a gigantic bully, holding in his hands powers unequalled in the world for ravage and spoliation, by the mere threat of losing which, he extorts from trembling Caesars every concession which his insatiable avarice, or his almost superhuman pride, requires, and by the same terror compelling Ostrogoths and Gepidae, and other Germanic races far nobler than his own, to assist in drawing his triumphal chariot. But of true constructive genius, of any notion of the right way to found an enduring empire, of the statesmanship of Ataulfus, or even of Alaric, he shows not a trace. To drink out of vessels of gold and silver, to put his foot upon the neck of his enemies, to be the terror of the world, these seem to be his only delights as a ruler of men.

Extent of
 Attila's
 Empire.

Some doubt has recently been thrown on the received accounts of the wide extent of Attila's power. So much of our information, it is said, is derived from Gothic sources, and a proud nation like the Goths had so obvious an interest in magnifying the might of the monarch by whom they themselves

had been humbled, that we are bound to make considerable deductions from their statements, and may perhaps reduce the dominions of the world-wide conqueror to an extent not quite equal to that of the modern Austrian Empire¹. But it may fairly be urged on the other hand that the Greek historian Priscus confirms, or even amplifies the statements of the Goth. According to him, when the ambassadors from the Eastern and Western Empires were met in trembling conference, consulting how they might possibly obtain a reasonable answer from the haughty barbarian, the Romans said, 'His head is turned by his successes. No ruler of Scythia or of any other country has ever achieved so much in so short a time as he has. He rules over the islands in the ocean' (by which we must probably understand the Scandinavian islands and peninsulas²); 'he has made the whole of Scythia his own; he has put the Roman Empire to tribute, and he thinks of renewing his attacks upon Persia. The road to that

BOOK 11.
CH. 2.P. 199
(Bonn
edition).

¹ This view is urged by Dr. Latham in his article 'Hunni' in Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography.

² It is perhaps deserving of consideration whether, if this northward impetus of Attila's subjects and allies really carried them to the Baltic and far into Denmark, it may not have something to do with the migrations of the English into Britain between the years 430 and 450. What they had before done against the 'Littus Saxonicum' had been apparently mere piracy and robbery. Now the whole nation migrates, a proceeding to which we can easily imagine them to have been stirred by the Teuton's loathing dread of the Mongol. And thus Attila may have been the unconscious founder of the English as well as of the Venetian dominion.

BOOK II. eastern kingdom is not untrodden by the Huns ;
 CH. 2. already they have marched fifteen days' journey
 from a certain lake [the Sea of Azof the Romans
 thought, but more probably the Caspian], and have
 ravaged Media.'

Add to this apparently trustworthy statement of Priscus the firm belief of Deguignes¹ that he has found traces in the historians of China of a confederacy between Attila and the rulers of that country, and we have reasons for not lightly abandoning the old belief in the wide extent of the Empire of Attila. The prince who felt China on his left, who threatened Persepolis, Byzantium, Ravenna in front, who ruled Denmark and its islands in his rear, and who ultimately appeared in arms on the soil of Champagne on his right, was no minor monarch, and had his empire been as deep as it was widespread, he might worthily have taken rank with Cyrus and Alexander.

At the same time it is well to remember that over far the larger part of this territory, Attila's can have been only an over-lordship, Teutonic, Slavonic, and Tartar chieftains of every name bearing rule under him. His own personal government, if government it can be called, may very likely have been confined nearly within the limits of the modern Hungary and Transylvania.

For nineteen years, from 434 to 453, the sullen might of Attila lay like a thunder-cloud over Europe. During that time the Eastern and Western

¹ Vol. I. part ii. pp. 298-301.

Courts were so closely united, as well by the bonds of relationship as by the overwhelming sense of their common danger, that it is not possible to disentangle their histories. Let us give a glance at the chief personages in the two Courts.

The younger Theodosius, son of Arcadius, and Emperor of the East, was in the twenty-fifth year of his age when we last met with him, leading his people from the Hippodrome to the Basilica, to return thanks for the victory of his generals at Ravenna, which replaced his kinsfolk of the West on the imperial throne. The fatuous dullness of his father and uncle no longer repels us in this member of the Theodosian family; he has some other employment than hunting; he illuminates sacred manuscripts with such skill as to earn the title of the Calligrapher; and he does not rush from blind confidence in his ministers to equally blind suspicion, with the instability which was so conspicuous in Arcadius and Honorius. Still, he is not a true King; he possesses no real momentum in the affairs of the state: as a rule, every important measure is decided upon by his sister Pulcheria, who is two years older than himself, who governs the East—as her aunt Placidia governs the West—respectably, but without genius, powerless to stem the quick-rushing torrent of barbarian ravage and change, but not conspicuously adding to the calamities of Rome by vices of her own¹.

BOOK II.
CH. 2.

Character
of Theodo-
sius II.

425.

¹ It should be said that the historian Eunapius (Excerpt. 70) gives a terrible picture of the evils which afflicted the state 'under

BOOK II. Theodosius himself, all through these years of
 CH. 2. political trouble and anxiety, is much engrossed in
 His theo- the controversy concerning the union of the divine
 logical position. and human natures in Christ ; but he does not win
 from it the same ecclesiastical renown which the
 Council of Constantinople brought to his more cele-
 brated namesake and grandfather. At the Council
 of Ephesus he appears (through his ministers) to
 favour the heresy of Nestorius ; at the close of his
 reign he leans towards the opposite heresy of Dios-
 corus and Eutyches, which is, immediately after
 his death, condemned by the great Council of Chal-
 cedon. At no time did he conspicuously defend
 the narrow *via media* of Orthodoxy.

The
 Empress
 Eudocia.

It is strange that the marriages of the Emperors
 of this family, which were daring and unconven-
 tional, did not remove from the race that effete and
 worn-out character which attaches to its later
 scions. The mother of Theodosius II was a Frank-
 ish princess, beautiful and impetuous, who bore the
 name of Eudoxia. His wife, the equally beautiful
 but portionless daughter of an Athenian rhetorician,
 brought up in the worship of the Olympian gods,
 was known in childhood by the name of Athenais,
 which, on her conversion to Christianity, she ex-
 changed for that of Eudocia. She was twenty-seven

the Empress Pulcheria' (*ἐπὶ Πουλχερίας τῆς Βασιλίσσης*). But he
 does not appear to attribute them to her personal agency, and the
 root-evil of all, the sale of public offices and the frightful corrup-
 tion of the ministers of state, is spoken of in precisely similar
 terms a generation earlier in the days of Arcadius and the
 eunuch Eutropius.

when her marriage with Theodosius, who was seven years her junior, raised her to the Imperial throne; but her influence seems never to have outweighed that of her sister-in-law Pulcheria, and after twenty-three years of married life, at the mature age of fifty, she incurred a suspicion of unfaithfulness to her husband, and was banished to Jerusalem where she died in 460, after an exile of sixteen years.

The only child of this marriage, with whom history has to concern itself, is a daughter, a *third* Eudoxia (for that name and Eudocia seem to be interchangeable), who was betrothed in her babyhood, and in the sixteenth year of her age married, to Valentinian III, son of her father's aunt, but her own contemporary, with whom we have already made acquaintance as Emperor of the West, reigning, but not governing, under the tutelage of his mother Placidia.

Eudoxia
wife of Va-
lentinian
III.

After one more granddaughter of the great Theodosius has been named, the sketch of the two imperial groups in the East and West will be complete. Besides her son Valentinian III, Placidia had a daughter Honoria, whose name was, for nearly twenty years, a by-word and a horror in the two Courts of Ravenna and Constantinople. Inheriting the coarse and sensual temperament of her father Constantius, and, like him, probably chafing at the restraints imposed on all the family of the 'sacred' Emperors, she was detected in a low intrigue with one of the chamberlains of the palace. Her mother sent her to Constantinople, where, for the

The Prin-
cess Hono-
ria.

434.

BOOK II. next sixteen years of her life, she was kept more or
 CH. 2. less closely guarded, at the court of her cousin
 Theodosius. The foolish girl, who was but in the
 seventeenth year of her age, filled with wild resent-
 ment against her family and her native land, hating
 the calm and sorrowful face of her mother, hating
 the severe dignity of Pulcheria, the psalmodies, the
 weaving, the visitations of the poor, in which she
 and her sisters passed their lives¹, looked away to
 the gloomy North for vengeance, and called upon
 the squalid Hun to be her deliverer. She contrived
 to send a ring to Attila, who had become King of
 the Huns in the year preceding her disgrace, and
 begged to be considered as his wife, or rather, prob-
 ably, as one of his wives, for the Huns, unlike the
 Goths, were polygamists. It was the wild act of a
 girl of sixteen, perhaps half-crazy with passion. We
 hear nothing of Attila's reply, nothing of any re-
 newed applications on Honoria's part for his assist-
 ance. Probably her apartments in the palace at
 Constantinople were thenceforward too strictly
 guarded to allow of her repeating the message. But

Honoria
 sends her
 ring to
 Attila.

¹ Sozomen, who was a contemporary historian, writes thus concerning Pulcheria and her sisters Arcadia and Marina : ' They all pursue the same mode of life, are sedulous in their attendance in the house of prayer, and evince great charity towards strangers and the poor. These sisters generally take their meals and walks together, and pass their days and their nights together in singing the praises of God. Like other exemplary women, they employ themselves in weaving and in similar occupations, avoiding idleness as unworthy of the life of virginity to which they have devoted themselves' (book ix, chap. 4, Bagster's translation).

Attila treasured the ring, and in after-days pulled through that tiny circlet long threads of diplomacy and a bloody skein of war.

BOOK 11.
CH. 2.
433.

Immediately upon Attila's accession, an embassy from Theodosius waited upon him and Bleda, in order to settle the various questions which had been raised between the Emperor and their deceased uncle Roua. The ambassadors met the kings at Margus, a town which stood at the point where the Morava, now the chief river of Servia, empties itself into the Danube. Not only the Hunnish kings, but all their retinue, remained seated on horseback, and, that the dignity of Rome might not suffer in their persons, the ambassadors did the same. Yet, though etiquette might be maintained, Plinthus and Epigenes, the Roman envoys, did not win any very brilliant diplomatic triumph for their master. The *honorarium*, or stipend, or by whatever name the Romans chose to style that yearly payment which Attila, with ever-increasing frankness, called by its true designation, tribute, was raised from £14,000 to £28,000; the fugitives Huns and Romans, were to be surrendered, or a fine of £8 per head paid for each who was not forthcoming; there were to be free markets at which the Romans and Huns should meet on equal terms, and any barbarian tribe upon which Attila might choose to levy war, was to be excluded from the alliance of Rome. In compliance with this treaty, two children of the royal blood of the Huns were surrendered by the Roman officers, and crucified on Roman

Treaty of
Margus be-
tween Ro-
mans and
Huns.

BOOK II. territory by the orders of Attila. Their only crime
 CH. 2. was flight.

433-441.
 Eight
 years of
 peace.

The
 Bishop of
 Margus.

The next eight years are a blank in the Roman annals, as far as the Huns are concerned. It was at this time probably that Attila made those extensive conquests northwards and eastwards to which reference has already been made, that he pushed his dominion to the shores of the German Ocean, and sent his armies fifteen days' march from the Caspian into Media¹. According to some accounts, he also, during the same interval, marched into the country watered by the Rhone, and fought the Burgundians. However this may be, in 441 the curtain again lifts, and the first scene of conflict is that same Servian town of Margus on the Morava, where we last saw Attila doubling the Roman tribute and discussing terms of peace with Plinthas and Epigenes. The bishop of this place had crossed the Danube on a marauding expedition, and robbed one of the royal treasure-houses of the Huns of the wealth deposited therein. Naturally this imitation of their own predatory tactics excited the fierce wrath of the barbarians. At the time of one of the great markets by the banks of the Danube, which were arranged for by the last treaty, the Huns made a savage attack on the unsuspecting Romans. To the

¹ This may have been an earlier invasion. Priscus uses very vague language concerning it, and attributes it to 'Basik and Cursik, men belonging to the royal family of Scythia [the Huns] who commanded a great multitude of followers, and afterwards entered into alliance with Rome.'

expostulations of the Imperial Court but one reply was returned : ' Give us up our refugees, and with our refugees the marauding bishop of Margus.' It began to be discussed among Prefects and Chamberlains whether it might not be better to give up this one rash bishop, that the whole nation perish not. The rumour reached the ears of the reverend prelate, who determined to be beforehand with Fate. Stealing across to the camp of the barbarians, he undertook to put them in possession of the city of Margus if the kings of the Huns would hold him harmless. Claspings his right hand, they swore to confer upon him all sorts of benefits if he would fulfil this promise. Then, having planted the barbarian host in a well-selected ambuscade on the northern shore of the Danube, he returned into the city, unsuspected by the sheep of his flock, and at a given signal opened the gates to his new allies. They rushed in and sacked the place, and one of the chief border cities of Moesia was thus lost to the Empire.

An incident like this seems worth recording, since it marks the rapidly changing manners and positions of men during this century of barbarian invasion. Of course the occupant of the see of Margus was no fair specimen of his order, either in his first marauding expedition, or in his subsequent treachery : but when we look back over two centuries, from the time we have now reached to the days of Cyprian, or over one century to the courtly theologian-disputants who hurried to the numberless

BOOK II.
CH. 2.
441.

BOOK II. councils of Constantius, and compare them with this
 CH. 2.
 441. mitred combatant, we feel that we have already
 passed from Ancient History into the Middle Ages :
 we might imagine ourselves standing before the
 warrior bishop of Beauvais, or one of the robber-
 bishops of the Rhine.

The Vases
 of Sirmium.

Out of the invasion, for which the fall of Margus gave the signal, another ecclesiastical complication, this time not with the Eastern but the Western Empire, took its rise. The town of Sirmium on the Save, situated in what is now the Austrian province of Sclavonia, though it has left no modern representative of its former glories, was once one of the most important cities of Pannonia. The bishop of Sirmium, seeing his city invested by the Hunnish army, gathered together the chalices and patens and other sacred vessels of his church, all of gold, and apparently of considerable value, and contrived to send them secretly to one Constantius, a Gaul, who was at that time officiating as Attila's secretary. The object of the trust hereby created was to liberate the bishop if he should survive the capture of the city, or if he should die, then to ransom as many as possible of the citizens. The city was taken, what became of the bishop we know not; but Constantius, ignoring the trust reposed in him, went off to Rome on private business, and there pawned the golden chalices for a large sum of money to a silversmith, named Silvanus¹.

¹ This Silvanus held some official position, but what, it is difficult to say. He was 'President of the Board of Silver at

Meanwhile his masters, Attila and Bleda, who probably did not like this journey to Rome on urgent private affairs, came to the conclusion that their secretary was playing the traitor, and soon after Constantius's return, he was crucified¹. Some time afterwards, the story of the embezzlement of the golden chalices came to the ears of Attila, and filled him with wrath. 'Had my secretary,' said he, 'not deposited these chalices at Rome, they would have come into *my* possession on the death of the swindler. Silvanus therefore has really stolen my property, and unless the Emperor of the West can restore the chalices, I insist that he shall surrender Silvanus to my vengeance.' How the affair, which dragged on for many years, at length terminated, we know not, but we shall meet hereafter with an embassy from Valentinian III commissioned to treat on this important subject.

Three years after these events Bleda died, and Attila became sole ruler of the Huns. ^{445.} ^{Death of} Historians ^{Bleda.} have accepted, perhaps too readily, a version of the story which attributes to the great Hun the guilt of fratricide, not in passion, but with premeditation and cunning. With all his vices, treachery and

Rome.' This may mean either that he was a *Præpositus Argentariorum*, or *Primicerius Scrinii ab Argento*, probably the latter. (See *Notitia Dignitatum*, Occidens, cap. x.)

¹ This mode of punishment marks the still heathen condition of the Huns. In the Empire, out of deference to the Christian sentiment, the punishment of crucifixion had been abandoned since the time of Constantine.

BOOK II. secret assassination scarcely seem consonant with the
 CH. 2. rest of his character¹.

447.
 Attila lays
 waste the
 Empire up
 to the walls
 of Constan-
 tinople.

In the year 447, Attila led his barbarian warriors on the most formidable of all his expeditions against the Eastern Empire. No detailed account of it has been preserved, but it is evident that no inroad of so destructive a kind had pierced the provinces between the Adriatic and the Aegean since Alaric met Stilicho in the Peloponnesus. The Huns pushed southwards as far as Thermopylae, and eastwards to the shore of the Dardanelles, where, at Gallipoli, they inflicted a disastrous defeat on the Roman troops². The walls of Constantinople, on this occasion as on so many subsequent ones, saved the very existence of the Empire. But though the tide of barbarian invasion rolled back into its old bed when there was nothing more left to ravage in the open country, a panic fear had seized the rulers of the state, who submitted with abject eagerness to every demand which their Master, for such they now considered him, might please to make upon them.

¹ Marcellinus and Jornandes, the chief authorities for the story of the fratricide, were separated by an interval of nearly a century from the event. On the other hand Priscus, the contemporary and guest of the king, speaks of Bleda's death (τὴν τοῦ Βλήδα τελευτήν) casually and calmly, and does not hint at any tragedy connected with it. But it is true that only fragments of his history remain.

² It need hardly be observed that, in the language of the historians of the time, the inhabitants of Thrace, of Syria, and of Egypt are still as uniformly spoken of under the name of Romans as those who were born and died by the banks of the Tiber.

Anatolius, a man of high rank who had held the office, still regarded with some of its old veneration, of Roman Consul, was sent to Attila's camp to negotiate terms of peace. The yearly tribute, which had been doubled at Attila's succession, was now tripled, and stood at £84,000, and at the same time £240,000 in gold were handed over as a settlement of past arrears. In order to raise this sum, all the usual fiscal expedients of a weak, yet tyrannical government were resorted to. To have the reputation of wealth was the surest passport to misery. Each Senator was assessed upon a certain sum, often greatly in excess of his real fortune ; but the amount which stood opposite to his name had to be provided, whether he possessed it or not. Blows and insults enforced the demands of the officers of the Imperial Exchequer, and the upshot of the whole was that in some cases the family jewels of ladies of high rank, or the articles of household furniture of men who had passed all their lives in affluence, were exposed for sale in the market-place ; while in other yet more desperate cases, the unhappy Roman noble escaped by the aid of a cord, or by the slower process of self-starvation, into a land where even the ministers of Theodosius could not follow him. And all this time the misery of the situation was aggravated by the thought that while the defence of the country was neglected, and, in consequence, these frightfully heavy subsidies had to be paid to her invaders, 'the country's wealth and the royal treasures were

BOOK II.

CH. 2.

Extortions
practised
to raise
the tribute.

BOOK II. being applied, not to their proper uses, but to ridiculous shows, tawdry pageants, and all the pleasures and all the extravagances of sensuality, such as no sensible man would have wasted money upon, even had the state been in the height of prosperity. Far less ought these men to have thus acted, who had so far neglected the military art that not only the Huns, but all the other barbarous tribes round had bound the Roman State to the payment of tribute¹.

Attila's oppressive embassies.

The ruler of the Huns marked well the abject terror of the Byzantine Court, and traded upon it with the low cunning of a savage. Scarcely had the treaty of Anatolius been concluded, when Attila sent ambassadors to Theodosius, demanding, in the usual formula, 'the surrender of the fugitives.' The Roman Emperor could only reply, 'We have surrendered all who were in our power;' but in order to secure powerful friends in the Hunnish encampment, he not only treated the ambassadors with splendid hospitality, but loaded them with rich presents on their departure. Again, and again, and again, four times in the space of a twelvemonth, did Attila repeat this process, selecting always for his ambassador some needy favourite whom he had a desire to enrich, and inventing such ridiculous pretexts for his embassies that all could see his real motive in sending them. This plan of pacific invasion began to tire out the patience of the meek Emperor and his ministers. His sister Pulcheria

¹ Priscus, p. 142 (Bonn edition, 1829).

no longer now exercised a predominant influence in the affairs of state. Theological discussions seem to have divided the imperial pair. She adhered to that side which was eventually, at the Council of Chalcedon, decreed to be the side of orthodoxy ; while the rival, and now reigning influence at court was that of the eunuch Chrysaphius, godson and partisan of Eutyches, the fanatic asserter of the absolute oneness of the nature of Christ even during the time of his Incarnation. Judging by the acts of Chrysaphius, we may safely conclude that any opinion of his concerning the nature of Him 'who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth' was as valuable as the opinion of an Australian savage concerning the philosophy of Plato.

BOOK II.
CH. 2.
447.

Ascend-
ency of
Chrysa-
phius.

In the year 448, yet another embassy arrived at Constantinople, more famous and more fateful than any which had preceded it. Let us observe well the names of the two chief ambassadors, for these are men who either by themselves or by their offspring will make a deep and ineffaceable mark on the history of their time. *Edecon* is introduced to us as a 'Scythian,' that is, a Hun¹, 'who had accomplished mighty deeds in war.' He was evidently

448.
Embassy of
Edecon and
Orestes.

¹ As before remarked the term Scythian, as used by the Greek historians, is of no ethnological value whatever. In classical times it meant probably sometimes Slavonic tribes, sometimes a race with Thracian affinities. Zosimus uses it regularly of the Goths, and now, in Priscus, it is the accepted equivalent for the Huns. Probably it was not intended to mean more than 'the barbarians (of whatever race) living north of the Danube and the Euxine.'

BOOK II. also one of the most intimate counsellors of Attila.
 Ч. 2. No small degree of jealousy existed between him
 448. and his colleague *Orestes*. This man, as we might
 Orestes father of Augus- have inferred from his name, was not of barbarian
 tulus. extraction. He was of 'Roman' descent (a term
 which is of course consistent with any provincial
 nationality within the limits of the Roman Em-
 pire), and 'he dwelt in that part of Pannonia
 which borders on the Save,' that is to say, within
 the limits of the modern Austrian province of Scla-
 vonia. He was at this time a regular subject of
 Attila, his country, which was included in the
 Western Emperor's share of Illyricum, having re-
 cently been ceded by Aetius to the Huns. He
 married the daughter of a certain Count Romulus,
 who dwelt at Patavio in Noricum, the place which
 is now called Passau¹, and which marks the junction
 of the mountain-nourished Inn with the more placid
 Danube. From this marriage was born to Orestes,
 probably about ten years after the date at which
 we have now arrived, a son who was named after
 his maternal grandfather Romulus, and upon whom
 history has fastened the unkind nickname of Augus-
 tulus. The other ambassador, Edecon, was prob-

Edecon
 father of
 Odoacer.

¹ This seems the most probable equivalent of 'Patavio, a city of Noricum' (Priscus, 185, 22). We know that its ancient name was 'Batava Castra,' from the Ninth Batavian Cohort being stationed there, and that in the ninth century (or earlier) it was called Pattavia, whence the modern Passau (see Böcking's *Notitia* 784). Poetovio, the modern Pettau, in Styria, would have seemed more likely to be the place, except that it was not in Noricum but in Pannonia.

ably already the father of a son whom he had named BOOK 11.
CH. 2. Odovakar (Odoacer). These two ambassadors, on 448.
Attila's de-
mands. arriving at the Imperial Court, presented the letters of their lord, in which, as usual, he expressed his high displeasure at the conduct of the Romans with reference to the refugees. War, immediate war, was threatened unless these were surrendered. Further, there must be no attempt on the part of the Romans to cultivate the district which would in later times have been called the March of the Danube. This was a belt of territory about 100 miles¹ wide on the southern side of the great stream, which Attila claimed to have annexed by right of conquest after his recent campaign. If this condition were not observed, war. The position of the great market for the interchange of Roman and Hunnish commodities must be shifted. It had been fixed at Margus, on the Danube; now it was to be at Naissus, the modern Nisch, 150 miles up the Morava, in Servia. And, lastly, ambassadors were to be sent to Attila, to talk over the points in dispute; and these were to be no men of second-rate position in the state, but men who had sat in the curule chair of the consuls, and the most eminent even among them. If these high dignitaries were

¹ Its width was 'five days' journey for a well-trained pedestrian' (*εὐζώνος ἀνδρὶ*). This certainly would not mean less than twenty miles a day. It was to reach from Pannonia (now Attila's by treaty with Aetius) on the West to Novae, now Sistova, in Bulgaria on the East. Eastward of Novae probably commenced the territory of the imperfectly subdued Acatziri. The dimension of the March from West to East would be about 300 miles.

BOOK II. afraid to undertake so long and wild a journey, he,
 CH. 2. the great king, would condescend to come as far as
 448. Sardica to meet them. Such was the imperious
 mandate of Attila, uttered by the lips of Edecon,
 and translated by the interpreter Vigilas to him,
 who was saluted by the names, once so mighty,
 Emperor and Augustus. Edecon then went to
 the house of Chrysaphius to confer with that
 minister as to the subject of his embassy. On his
 way he said to the interpreter, Vigilas, 'How beau-
 tiful is the Emperor's palace, how richly adorned
 with all precious things, and how happy must be
 the lives of the lords of such magnificence.' Vigi-
 las repeated the remark to Chrysaphius, and with
 the words a wicked thought entered the mind of
 the Monophysite eunuch. He said to Edecon,
 'You, too, might sit under gilded ceilings¹ of your
 own, and be lord of vast wealth, if you would leave
 the party of the Huns and take up ours.'

*Pourpar-
 lers be-
 tween
 Chrysa-
 phius and
 Edecon.*

Edecon. 'I could not do that, being another
 man's servant, without my lord's consent.'

Chrysaphius. 'Have you free access to your
 lord's person?'

Edecon. 'Yes. I am one of the nobles selected
 for the purpose of keeping watch in arms over his
 person. We serve for so many days and then are
 relieved.'

Chrysaphius. 'If you will promise secrecy, I

¹ Compare Horace, 'Non ebur neque aureum
 Mea renidet in domo lacunar,'
 and his favourite phrase '*laqueata tecta*.'

can tell you something very greatly to your advantage. Come to dine with me, without Orestes and your other colleagues, and we can talk the matter over at our leisure.'

BOOK II.
CH. 2.
448.

So a secret meeting was arranged at the house of the eunuch, and there in the presence and by the assistance of Vigilas, evidently a Byzantine *dragoman* of the worst type, a vile plot was hatched. Chrysaphius first swore that what he had to say should in no case injure Edecon. Edecon swore a counter oath that he would not reveal, even if he could not accomplish, the designs of the minister; and then Chrysaphius at length uttered the fatal secret. 'If when you return to Scythia you will slay Attila and then come to us, you shall have a happy life here and vast wealth.'

Assassination plot hatched.

Edecon. 'I promise to do so. But I shall want some small sum of money to be paid me in advance, say about fifty pounds of gold [£2,000], in order to ensure the co-operation of the common soldiers under my command.'

Chrysaphius. 'There will be no difficulty about that. You shall have the money at once.'

Edecon. 'No, I will not take it at once, for Attila will ask me on my return, as he asks all his ambassadors, how much the mission has been worth to me; and I could not deceive him because all my colleagues will know what weight of gold I am carrying back. You must let me return to report the answer of your master as to the refugees, and Vigilas must come with me to receive the rejoinder

BOOK II. of mine. Then, through Vigilas, I will send you
 Чл. 2. word how the rest of the gold (beyond the ordi-
 448. nary gratuity to an ambassador) had better be sent
 to me.'

The plot
 communi-
 cated to
 Theodo-
 sius.

This plan met with the full approval of the eunuch, who, as soon as he had dismissed his guest, hurried away to the palace to inform Theodosius of the new prospect of an early termination of Attila's embassies. In the interest of the elegant arts, one regrets to have to record that the Imperial Calligrapher, the Illuminator of Sacred Manuscripts, at once accepted the proposal, and calling in Martialius, the *Magister Officiorum*, and chief of what we should call 'the Secret Service Department,' consulted with him what shape the return embassy to Attila should now assume. Of a truth many things were changed, and not altogether for the better, since the Consul Fabricius handed over to Pyrrhus the traitor, who proposed to purchase the favour of Rome by administering poison to his master.

To be car-
 ried into
 effect by a
 sham em-
 bassy

In order to cloak the atrocious scheme thus concocted, the Emperor and his minister decided to send to the coast of Attila a sham embassy, in whose train the intending murderers might travel unsuspected, regardless, of course, of the danger to which they exposed the innocent envoy, who in the event of the plot being discovered was likely to plead in vain the sanctity of an ambassador's person. The man selected for this post was Maximin, an officer of high, but not the highest, rank,

on which
 Maximin is
 sent.

and of illustrious lineage, but whose name had not figured in the Consular Fasti. He invited Priscus 'the sophist,' or, as we should say, professor of rhetoric and man of letters in ordinary, to accompany him, and it is to the diary¹ of the embassy kept by Priscus, and afterwards interwoven by him into his history, that we are indebted for almost all trustworthy details of the Court and Camp of Attila. He assures us emphatically, and the whole course of the history tends to confirm his statement that the murder-secret was not confided either to him or to his patron, but that the ostensible object of their mission was to them the real one. As Maximin certainly, and Priscus probably, still adhered to the worship of the Olympian divinities, we are driven, however reluctantly, to the conclusion that by this time the traitors, the time-servers, and the hypocrites had ranged themselves on the side of successful Christianity, and that when the Emperor wanted a man of indisputably high character and sterling honesty to mask by his innocence a dark and nefarious design his thoughts naturally turned to the few remaining Pagan statesmen, who probably held at his court a position not unlike that of the Roman Catholics under Queen Elizabeth or the Huguenots under Louis XIII.

BOOK II.
CH. 2.
448.

Maximin
and Priscus
Pagans.

¹ Many of the details which Priscus gives as to the movements of the ambassadors are so unnecessarily minute as to suggest the conclusion that they were jotted down from day to day and almost from hour to hour while the embassy was still proceeding.

BOOK II. The message which was entrusted to Maximin
 CH. 2.
 448.
 Stout
 answer sent
 to the Hun.

was couched in a less servile tone than the recent replies of Theodosius. As if they already saw the knife of the assassin piercing the heart of the great Hun, the Emperor and the eunuch began to express their weariness of Attila's perpetual reclamations. 'You ought not to overleap the obligations of treaties and invade the Roman territory. As for fugitives, besides those already surrendered, I now return you seventeen, and I really have no more.' So ran the letter. Verbally Maximin was instructed to say that Attila must not expect ambassadors of any higher rank than him who now spoke to be sent to him, since this had not been the usage with his own ancestors or any of the other northern rulers, but the custom had hitherto been to send any chance person, soldier or letter-carrier, whose services were available. And as for the king's proposition to come and meet an ambassador of consular rank at Sardica, he himself had made that impossible by his sack of that very town. Such was the contemptuous reply of the Byzantine to the Hunnish court as it was intended to have been delivered; but not such was the actual message which reached the ears of Attila; for, as we shall see, like good wine it mellowed considerably on the journey.

Constanti-
 nople to
 Sardica.

The first fortnight of travel seems to have been pleasant and uneventful enough. During all this time the Roman and barbarian ambassadors were passing through the comparatively tranquil and

prosperous province of Thrace. At the end of it they reached Sardica, about 350 miles from Constantinople, and then an outpost of Thrace looking towards Moesia, as its representative Sofia is now of Roumelia looking towards Servia. This was the place at which almost exactly a century before (343) the celebrated council had been held which enunciated again the Nicene Creed, and gave to the See of Rome the right of deciding whether a bishop had been lawfully deposed. Other matters however than theological wrangles had of late forced themselves on the attention of the unhappy inhabitants of Sardica. As we have just heard from the lips of Theodosius, the town had been terribly pillaged and laid waste by Attila. The destruction however was not complete. There were still houses and some inhabitants from whom it was possible for the ambassadors to buy sheep and oxen. These they killed and roasted; and having prepared a goodly repast, they thought it would be but courteous to ask Edecon and the barbarians attending him to partake with them. As they sat long over the meal, conversation turned upon the greatness and majesty of their respective masters. The Huns, of course, magnified the might of Attila; the Romans tried to extol their great Augustus. At this point of the conversation, Vigilas, with an indiscretion which can only be accounted for by supposing that he had plied the wine-cup too freely, said, 'I cannot think it right to compare gods and men together.

BOOK II.

CH. 2.

448.

Brawl at
the banquet.

BOOK II. Attila, after all, is but a man, while Theodosius I
 CH. 2. look upon as a god.' At these words the Huns

448. started up with flushed cheeks and angry eyes ;
 and the pleasant diplomatic banquet was within
 an ace of ending in bloodshed. Priscus and Maxi-
 min however succeeded in silencing their noisy
 colleague, guided the conversation into safer
 channels, and by their civility mollified the wrath
 of the Huns. That there might be no chance
 of any rancorous feeling remaining in their minds,
 Maximin, when the banquet was over, made hand-
 some presents, both to Edecon and Orestes, of
 silken raiment and 'Indian jewels'.

Dark
 words of
 Orestes.

The bestowal of these presents led to another
 curious outburst of angry feeling. Orestes sat out
 all his companions, and when they were gone came
 up to Maximin and thanked him heartily for his
 presents. 'You,' said he, 'are a wise man, of a
 most excellent disposition. You are not like those
 insolent courtiers at Byzantium, who gave presents
 and invitations to Edecon but none to me.' 'When ?
 where ? how ?' gasped out the puzzled ambassador ;
 but Orestes, vouchsafing no more particular state-
 ment of his grievances, stalked moodily out of the
 room.

Social
 position of
 the Hun
 and the
 Roman.

Next day, on the journey, Maximin and Priscus
 reported this strange conversation to Vigilas. He,
 of course, knew well enough to what it referred,
 but did not choose to explain. He only said,
 'Orestes has no business to be offended. He is

¹ Were these diamonds, or pearls ?

but a secretary, a mere squire of Attila : Edecon is of course differently treated. He is a great warrior and a Hun by birth, and far superior in position to the other.' Already then, in the estimation of a Byzantine dragoman, to be 'a Hun by birth' was a higher position than that of a well-born Roman provincial. Vigilas afterwards repeated this conversation to Edecon and had much difficulty, so he told his companions, in soothing the barbarian's resentment against the pretensions of Orestes to be put on an equality with him.

BOOK II.
CH. 2.
448.

A further hundred miles of travel brought the ambassadors to Naissus (now Nissa or Nisch, on the confines of Servia), and here they found such traces of the ravage of the Hun as his Turkish kinsman has often in later days left behind him in the same regions. A city utterly empty of inhabitants, in the churches a few sick folk too weak to fly, every place down to the river's bank full of human bones and skulls : that is how the Turanian leaves his mark. 'But we found,' says Priscus, with simplicity, 'a clean spot a little above the river, and there we rested for the night.'

Sardica to
Naissus.

Near to this city, which had become a tomb, lay the imperial 'army of Illyricum,' under the command of the General-in-chief, Agintheus. Five out of the seventeen fugitives, whom Theodosius had promised to surrender to Attila, were there, imagining themselves safe under the shelter of the eagles. But the Emperor's orders were clear. The Roman General had to give up the five suppliants to the

Fugitives
surrendered.

BOOK II. Roman ambassador for him to hand over to the
 CH. 2. Hunnish king. Agintheus spoke kindly ¹ to them ;
 448. but as they knew, in all probability, that they were
 going to a death of torture, kind words from the
 ghost of the old Roman war-wolf were not much to
 the purpose.

Attila's
 hunting.

At length the ambassadors reached the shores
 of the Danube. The roads leading down to the
 river were crowded with Huns ; and ferrymen were
 plying across the stream in their uncouth boats
 each made of a single tree roughly hollowed out.
 They were thus without delay transported to the
 northern bank of the river ; but if they had sup-
 posed that all this stir was made in expectation of
 their own arrival they were soon undeceived. The
 barbarian king had announced that he meant to
 cross over into the Romans' land to hunt, and the
 expectation of his coming had caused this stir among
 his subjects. Like the Percy's 'Hunting of the
 Cheviot,' Attila's hunting meant war, war over the
 endless grievance of the unsundered refugees.
 It was in fact the barbarian's device to accomplish
 what the modern strategist calls 'Mobilisation.'

Insolence
 of the Bar-
 barians.

On the second day after crossing the Danube,
 the Roman party came in sight of the numerous
 tents of Attila, and were about to pitch their own
 on a hill-top near. But this the Huns around
 them would by no means permit : 'they must
 come down and pitch their tents in the plain : it

¹ φιλοφρονησάμενος.

would be quite improper for the Roman ambassador to occupy the hill while Attila was below in the valley.' When this difficulty was settled, the Romans, as it was still early afternoon, expected doubtless an audience that day with Attila. Instead of this, however, several of the Hunnish nobility came, together with Edecon and Orestes, to their tent and demanded to know the tenour of their message to the king. Naturally the ambassadors replied that their commission was for Attila alone, and they would disclose it to no other person. At that reply, Scotta, one of the Hunnish magnates, burst out with a passionate question, 'Do you take us for busybodies, who came here out of our own prying curiosity? Attila sent us, and we must have your answer.' The ambassadors firmly declined, pleading the invariable usage of their profession. Whereupon the Huns galloped away, and soon returned, ominous exception, without Edecon. 'Your commission,' said they, 'to our king is so and so. Such concessions about refugees, such messages about future ambassadors. Deny that this is the purport of your instructions if you can. If you have nothing to add to this, return at once to your own country.' In vain did the Romans try to maintain the proper official reserve and refuse to say whether this was indeed a true summary of their instructions or not. Their faces doubtless showed that the arrow had hit the mark: the barbarians' version of their commission was correct in the smallest particulars, and to all further

BOOK 11.

CH. 2.

448.

BOOK II. protestations of the Romans the Huns had but one
CH. 2. reply continually repeated, 'Begone directly.'

448.

Maximin and Priscus were bewildered, as well they might be, by this strange innovation on the customs of diplomacy. Vigilas, who knew that for his part, the darker part of the enterprise, access to the court of Attila and some days' sojourn there were essential, bitterly complained of his colleagues' truthfulness. 'They might have vamped up some other matter, and declared that the Huns had *not* revealed the whole of the commission. It would have been better to be detected eventually in a falsehood, than to return without even seeing Attila.'

The plot
 revealed
 by Edecon
 to Attila.

Little did the false interpreter guess upon what a volcano he himself was standing. The true cause of Attila's strange demeanour was that Edecon had revealed the plot. Either he had only feigned compliance from the first—the more probable supposition—or else that wild conversation at Sardica and the tidings which Vigilas himself had brought him, of the rage and jealousy of Orestes, had satisfied him that the risk was too great to run, with such an unwise person as the interpreter for confederate, and with such an angry rival as the secretary for spy on his movements. And therefore, at the very first opportunity when he found himself alone with Attila, he rehearsed to him the whole plan for his intended assassination, and at the same time furnished him with the particulars of the intended Roman reply, which Edecon had, no doubt, received from Chrysaphius.

It was night when the party of the ambassadors received their peremptory orders to depart. With heavy hearts they were watching their attendants loading the beasts of burden, when they received another message, giving them an ungracious permission to remain where they were till daybreak. A present of an ox for roasting, and some fish, salted we may suppose as it came from the Euxine, attested the surly hospitality of Attila. Next morning, they thought, 'Surely some act of kindness and gentleness will now be shown to us by the barbarian.' But no: there came only the same harsh command, 'Begone, if you have no other commission to unfold.' Hereupon Priscus, seeing the deep dejection of his patron, resolved to try what prayers and promises could accomplish with one of Attila's ministers. His chief minister, Onégesh, who was well-known by the Romans, and on the whole favourably inclined towards them, was absent; but Scotta, his brother, was in the Hunnish camp, and to him Priscus betook himself, using another interpreter than Vigilas. He enlarged on the advantages to the two nations, but still more to the house of Onégesh, which would result from the peaceful outcome of the negotiations, on the presents which were in store for Onégesh at Constantinople, and on those which Maximin would immediately bestow on Scotta. And finally, he wound up with a diplomatic appeal to the vanity of the Hun. 'I have heard,' said he, 'that Attila pays great deference to the advice of Scotta, but I shall never believe it if you cannot

BOOK II.
CH. 2.448.
Priscus
makes
friends
with
Scotta.

BOOK II. accomplish so small a matter as to obtain for us this
 CH. 2. interview.' 'Doubt not that I can do it,' he answered:
 448. 'my influence with the king is just as great as my brother's.' And with that he mounted his horse and galloped off to the king's tent. The faithful Priscus returned to his master, who was lying on the grass with Vigilas, while again the packing of the horses was going forward. As soon as they heard of the slight hope which had arisen, and of the influence which Priscus had brought to bear on the mind of Attila, they sprang to their feet, and while warmly commending the sophist for his happy inspiration, began to discuss what they should say to the king, and how the presents of Theodosius and of Maximin himself should be offered for his acceptance.

An interview granted.

Soon Scotta returned and escorted them to the royal tent. 'When we obtained admittance,' says Priscus, 'we found the monarch seated on a wooden stool¹. We stood a little way off from the throne, but Maximin went forward, and after making obeisance to the barbarian, and handing him the Emperor's letter, said, "Our Sovereign prays for the safety of thyself and all around thee." Attila answered, "May the Romans receive exactly what they desire for me." Then, turning sharp round to Vigilas, "Shameless beast!" he said, "How have you dared to come to me, knowing, as you do right well, the terms of peace which I settled with you and

¹ *διφpos*. Perhaps something like the *sella curulis* of the Romans.

Anatolius ; and how I then said that no more am-
bassadors were to come to me till all the fugitives
were given up." When Vigilas replied that the
Romans no longer had with them any refugees of
Scythian origin, since we had surrendered all
that were with us, Attila grew still more furious,
and shouted out with a loud voice every opprobrious
epithet that he could think of ; "I would impale
you," he roared out, "and leave you as food for
vultures, if it were not for your sacred character of
envoy, which I would not seem to outrage, fitting
as the punishment would be for your impudence
and your reckless falsehoods. As for Scythian re-
fugees, there are still many among the Romans."
And here he bade his secretaries read out their
names, inscribed on a roll of paper. When they
had rehearsed them all, he bid Vigilas depart with-
out delay. With him was to go Eslas the Hun,
commissioned to order the Romans to restore all
the fugitives who had gone over to them from the
days of Carpilio, son of Aetius, who was sent as a
hostage to his court, and had escaped. "For," con-
tinued Attila, "I will never endure that my own
servants should come forth and meet me in battle,
all useless though they may be to help those with
whom they have taken refuge, and who entrust to
them the guardianship of their own land. For
what city, or what fortress has any of these men
been able to defend when I have determined on
its capture?"

After this outburst the king condescended to

BOOK 11.

CH. 2.

448.

BOOK II. accept the presents which Maximin had brought,
 CH. 2. and then he repeated his commands as to the future
 448. conduct of the negotiations. Having satisfied him-
 Presents self, probably, in the course of this interview that
 accepted. Maximin was an honest man, and guiltless of any
 complicity in the design against his life, he felt that
 he could safely indulge in the pleasures which such
 an embassy brought to him—gifts for himself, gifts
 for his dependents, and the gratification of tramp-
 ling on the pride of Rome by exhibiting the im-
 perial ambassadors as frightened suppliants for his
 favour. All, therefore, except Vigilas, received or-
 ders to repair to his palace in the interior, and there
 to wait for the written reply which he would send
 to Theodosius.

Vigilas
 remanded
 to Constan-
 tinople.

Vigilas, on the other hand, whose presence doubt-
 less suggested, even to the brave Hun, uncomfort-
 able thoughts of midnight alarms and the assassin's
 dagger entering between his ribs, was ordered to
 return at once to Constantinople with the routine
 message and menace concerning the refugees. Eslas
 went with him as a spy on his movements: Edecon
 visited him immediately after the interview in the
 royal tent, to assure him that he was still true to
 the plot, and to press him to bring back the pro-
 mised gold. At the same time, with considerable
 ingenuity, Attila issued a proclamation, 'forbidding
 Vigilas to purchase any Roman captive or barbarian
 slave, or horses, or anything else but necessary food
 until the differences between the Romans and Huns
 should be arranged.' The effect of this proclama-

tion was to deprive Vigilas of any plausible pretext for bringing back any large amount of gold from Constantinople. If, notwithstanding this prohibition, he still brought gold with him, that gold could only be the blood-money of Attila.

BOOK II.
CH. 2.
448.

There is no need to trace the return of the base and blundering Vigilas to Constantinople, whither he goes still entirely unwitting that Attila has sapped below his mine. We follow honest Maximin and his friend as they journey northwards into the recesses of Hungary. For a certain distance they travelled in the train of the Barbarian; then they received orders to turn off into another road. Attila was about to visit a certain village, and there add to his numerous harem another wife, the daughter of one Escam¹; and apparently he did not choose that the courtly Byzantines should look on the rude wedding festivities of a Hunnish polygamist. The ambassadors had to cross three large rivers in the course of their journey. The names of these rivers are not easy to recognise, but they may possibly be represented by the Drave, the Temes, and the Theiss. They crossed them, as before, in tree-trunk boats; while, for the smaller streams and the marshes, they availed themselves of the convenient rafts which

Maximin
and Priscus
in the heart
of Hun-
land.

¹ Some authors understand that the new bride's name was Escam, and that she was herself Attila's daughter. But the Greek does not absolutely require this interpretation, and if it had been correct, such an incestuous union would probably have called forth stronger comment on the part of Priscus. His words are—*ἐν ἣ γαμῖν θυγατέρα Ἑσκάμ ἐβούλετο, πλείστας μὲν ἔχων γαμετάς, ἀγόμενος δὲ καὶ ταύτην κατὰ νόμον τὸν Σκυθικόν.*

BOOK II. the Huns always carried about with them on their
 CH. 2. waggon in all their journeys through that often
 448. inundated country. They were kindly entertained
 in the Hunnish villages, and received such provisions as the inhabitants had to offer; no wheat, indeed, but millet, for food, and for drink *medus* and *camus*, two beverages which seem to correspond to our mead and beer.

The storm
 by the
 lake.

One night, after a long day's march, they pitched their tents beside a lake which offered them the advantage of good and sweet water. 'Suddenly,' says Priscus, 'there arose a great storm of wind, accompanied by thunderings and frequent flashes of lightning and torrents of rain. Our tent was blown down, and all our travelling furniture was rolled over and over into the waters of the lake. Terrified by this accident and by the din of the storm which filled all the air, we left the spot and soon wandered away from each other, everyone taking what he supposed to be the right road. At length, by different paths, we all reached the neighbouring village, and turned in to the huts for shelter. Then, with loud outcry, we began inquiring into our losses. Roused by our clamour, the Scythians started up, kindled the long reeds which serve them for candles, and which threw a good light upon the scene, and then asked us what on earth we wanted that we were making such an uproar. The barbarians who were with us explained how we had been thrown into confusion by the storm, whereupon they kindly called us

into their houses, and by lighting a very great number of torches did something to warm us.

BOOK II.
CH. 2.

‘The chieftainess of the village, who was one of the wives of Bleda [Attila’s brother], sent us a supply of food, of which we gladly partook. Next morning, at daybreak, we set about searching for our camp-furniture, and were fortunate enough to find it all, some in the place where we pitched our tents, some on the shore, and some in the lake itself, from which we succeeded in fishing it up. The whole of that day we spent in the village, drying our things, for the storm had now ceased and the sun was shining brightly. After attending to our beasts, we visited the queen, saluted her respectfully, and repaid her for her hospitality with presents. These were three silver bowls, some red skins, Indian pepper¹, dates, and other articles of food, which the barbarians prize as foreign to their climate. Then we wished her health and happiness in return for her hospitality to us, and so we departed.’

448.
Bleda's
widow.

At length, after seven days’ journey, they reached a village, where they were ordered to stop. Their road here joined that by which the royal bridegroom would be approaching, and they were not to presume to proceed till Attila should have gone before them. In the little village where they were thus detained they met some unexpected com-

Meeting
of Eastern
and
Western
Ambassa-
dors.

¹ It will be remembered that both these two kinds of goods, red skins and pepper, figured forty years before this in the ransom which Alaric exacted from Rome.

BOOK II. panions. Primutus, the Roman governor of Noricum, Count Romulus of Passau, the father-in-law of Orestes, and Romanus, a general of legionaries, with probably a long train of attendants, were already testing, perhaps somewhat severely, the resources and accommodation of the Hunnish village. They, too, had come in an embassy : they represented the Emperor of the West, and it is needless to say that the subject which they had come to discuss was that interminable one, the sacred vases of Sirmium. The father of Orestes, and Constantius the Roman secretary of Attila, journeyed, in an unofficial capacity, with the ambassadors. It was certainly a striking scene : the ambassadors from Ravenna and Constantinople, the representatives of the dignity of the two imperial courts, the functionaries who between them could set forth the whole majesty that might still survive in the title *Senatus Populus Que Romanus*, meeting in a dingy little village in Hungary, and waiting with abject submission till a snub-nosed Kalmuck should ride past and contemptuously toss them a permission to follow in his train. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Attila, who had a genius for scenic effect in the enhancement of his glory, not unlike that which our century has witnessed in the Napoleons, had purposely arranged this confluence of the two embassies, and partly for this cause had invited Maximin to follow him into Hungary.

After crossing a few more rivers, the united em-

bassies came in sight of the village in which was situated the palace of Attila. Students have discussed whether this Hunnish capital is represented by the modern city of Pesth, by Tokay, or by some other less-known name; but we may dismiss with absolute indifference the inquiry in what particular part of a dreary and treeless plain a barbarian king reared his log-huts, of which probably, twenty years after his death, not a vestige remained.

BOOK 11.

CH. 2.

448.

As Attila entered the village he was met by a procession of maidens in single file wearing linen veils, thin and white, and so long that under each veil, held up as it was by the hands of the women on either side of the path, seven maidens or more were able to walk. There were many of these sets of girls, each set wearing one veil; and as they walked they sang national songs in honour of the king. The last house which he reached before his own was that of his favourite and chief minister Onégesh¹, and as he passed it the wife of the

Attila's
triumphal
entry.

¹ Priscus calls him Onegesius, and Thierry remarks, 'Onégèse dont le nom grec indiquait l'origine,' vol. i. p. 98. But everything seems to show that Onegesius was a pure Hun. His brother's name was Scotta. The dialogue at Sardica, in which Vigilas compared the positions of Edecon the Hun and Orestes the Roman provincial, shows how impossible it would have been for any but a full-blooded barbarian to attain to the rank which Onegesius held. And the name of Oebarstius, Attila's paternal uncle, recorded by Priscus (p. 208, ed. Bonn), shows his habit of Grecising the names of undoubted Huns. We may therefore conclude that Onegesius is the similarly Grecised form of some such name as Onégesh, by which it seems better to call him in order to mark his barbarian origin.

BOOK II. owner came forth with a multitude of attendants
 CH. 2. bearing food and wine ¹—‘the highest honour,’ says

448. Priscus, ‘which one Scythian can pay to another’—
 saluted him, and begged him to partake of the re-
 past which she had provided as a token of her
 loyalty. The king, wishing to gratify the wife of
 his most trusted counsellor, partook accordingly,
 without dismounting from his horse, his attendants
 holding high before him the silver table upon
 which the banquet was spread. Having eaten and
 drunk he rode on to his palace.

The palace
 of Attila.

This edifice, the finest in all the country round,
 stood on a little hill, and seemed to dominate the
 whole settlement. Yet it was in truth, as we have
 already said, only a log-hut of large dimensions.
 Externally it seems that it was built of half-trunks
 of trees, round side outwards, and within, it was
 lined with smoothly-planed planks. Round the en-
 closure in which the dwellings of the king and his
 wives were placed ran a wooden palisading, for
 ornament, not defence ; and the top of the palace
 was fashioned into the appearance of battlements.
 Next to the king’s house in position, and only second
 to it in size, rose the dwelling of Onégesh. The only
 stone building in the place was a bath, which Oné-
 gesh had built at a little distance from his palisad-
 ing. The stone for this building had been brought
 from quarries in the Roman province of Pannonia ;
 and in fact all the timber used in the settlement
 had been imported likewise, for in the vast and

The house
 of the
 Prime
 Minister.

¹ Compare Genesis xiv. 18.

dreary plain where the nomad nation had pitched its camp not a tree was growing, not a stone underlay it. With the building of the bath of Onégesh a grim jest was connected. The architect, a Roman provincial, who had been carried captive from Sirnium, hoped that his ingenuity would at least be rewarded by the boon of freedom, if no other architect's commission was paid him. But no such thoughts suggested themselves to the mind of Onégesh. When he had completed his task, the architect was rewarded by being turned into bath-man, and had to wait upon his master and his master's guests whensoever they had a mind for the pleasures of the *sudatorium* and the *tepidarium*. Thus, as Priscus remarks, with a hint, no doubt, at the personal uncleanness of the Huns, the unhappy man of science 'had prepared for himself unconsciously a worse lot than that of ordinary servitude among the Scythians.'

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448.

Onégesh himself, who was absent when Priscus sought an interview with his brother Scotta, had now returned to his master's court. He had been engaged in quelling the last remains of independence among the Acatziri, a people possibly of Slavonic origin, who dwelt on the Lower Danube. The Byzantine ministers had endeavoured to parry Attila's attack by stirring up some of the petty chieftains of this nation against him. But, with their usual tendency to blunder, they had sent their most costly and honourable presents to the wrong man, and consequently Curidach, the real head of the con-

Onégesh's
campaign
against the
Acatziri.

BOOK II. federacy, having received only the second gift, called
 CH. 2. in the aid of Attila to avenge the insult and beat
 448. down the power of his associated kings. The Hun was nothing loth, and soon succeeded in quelling all opposition. He then invited Curidach to come and celebrate their joint triumph at his court; but that chieftain, suspecting that his benefactor's kindness was of the same nature as the promised boon of Polyphemus to Ulysses, 'I will eat Outis last,' courteously declined. 'It is hard,' he said, 'for a man to come into the presence of a god; and if it be not possible to look fixedly even at the orb of the sun, how shall Curidach gaze undistressed upon the greatest of gods?' The compliment served for the time, but Attila understood what it was worth, and at a convenient season sent his Grand Vizier, Onégesh, apparently to dethrone Curidach and to proclaim the eldest son of Attila king of the Acatziri in his stead. From this expedition the Prime Minister had now just returned successful and in high favour with his master.

The ambassadors were hospitably entertained by the wife and family of Onégesh. He himself had to wait upon the king to report the success of his mission, and the only drawback which had befallen them, an accident namely to the young prince, who had slipped off his horse and fractured some of the bones of his right hand. At nightfall Maximin pitched his tents a little way off the enclosure of the royal dwellings, and next morning he sent Priscus early to the house of Onégesh with servants

bearing presents both from himself and from Theodosius. The zealous rhetorician was actually up before the barbarian. The house was still close barred and there was no sign of any one stirring.

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CH. 2.

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While Priscus was waiting, and walking up and down before the palisading which surrounded the house of Onégesh, a man, with the dress and general appearance of a Hun, came up and saluted him with a well-pronounced Greek *χαίρε* ('How d'ye do?'). A Hun speaking Greek was an anomaly which aroused all the attention of the Sophist, for, as he says, 'though it is true that this people, who are a kind of conglomerate of nations, do sometimes affect the speech of the Goths, or even that of the Italians, in addition to their own barbarous language, they never learn Greek, except indeed they be inhabitants of Thrace or Dalmatia, who have been carried captive into the Hunnish territory. And these captives or their offspring may be easily known by their ragged garments and scabby heads, and all the other tokens of their having changed their condition for the worse. But my gentleman seemed like a flourishing Scythian, handsomely dressed, and having his hair neatly clipped all round his head. So, returning his salutation, I asked him who he was, and from what part of the world he had come into that barbarian land to adopt the Scythian life. "What has put it into your head to ask me such a question as that?" said he. "Your Greek accent," answered I. Then

The Greek
who had
turned
Hun.

BOOK II. he laughed and said, "Tis true I am of Greek parentage, and I came for purposes of trade to Viminacium, a city of Moesia, on the Danube" [about

CH. 2.
448.

sixty miles below Belgrade]. "There I abode for a long time, and married a very wealthy wife. But on the capture of the city by the Huns I was stripped of all my fortune, and assigned as a slave to this very Onégesh before whose door you are standing. That is the custom of the Huns: after Attila has had his share, the chiefs of the nation are allowed to take their pick of the wealthiest captives, and so Onégesh chose me. Afterwards, having distinguished myself in some actions with the Romans and the Acatziri, I surrendered to my master all the spoils which I had taken in war, and thus, according to the law of the Scythians, I obtained my freedom. I married a barbarian wife, by whom I have children: I am admitted as a guest to the table of Onégesh, and I consider my present mode of life decidedly preferable to my past. For when war is over, the people of this country live like gentlemen, enjoying themselves to the full, and free from worry of any kind. But the people in Romanland are easily worsted in war, because they place their hopes of safety on others rather than themselves. Their tyrants will not allow them the use of arms, and the condition of those who are armed is even more dangerous, from the utter worthlessness of their generals, who have no notion of the art of war. Then, too, Peace has its injuries not less severe than War. Think of all the cruelties

practised by the collectors of the revenue, the infamy of informers, and the gross inequalities in the administration of the laws. If a rich man offends, he can always manage to escape punishment; but a poor man, who does not understand how to arrange matters, has to undergo the full penalty, unless indeed he be dead before judgment is pronounced, which is not unlikely, considering the intolerable length to which lawsuits are protracted. But what I call the most shameful thing of all is that you have to pay money in order to obtain your legal rights. For a man who has been injured cannot even get a hearing from the court without first paying large fees to the judge and the officials who serve him."

BOOK II.

CH. 2.

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In reply to this angry outburst, Priscus entered into a long and sophistical disquisition on the advantages of division of labour, the necessity that judges and bailiffs, like men of other occupations, should live by their calling, and so on. It is easy to see that Priscus felt himself to be talking as sagely as Socrates, upon whose style his reply is evidently modelled; but that reply has the fault so common with rhetoricians and diplomatists, of being quite up in the air, and having no relation to the real facts of the case. His conclusion is the most interesting part of the speech: "As for the freedom which you now enjoy, you may thank Fortune for that and not your master, who sent you to war, where you were likely to have been killed by the enemy on account of your inexperience. But the

Priscus's
apology
for the
Empire.

BOOK II. Romans treat even their slaves better than this.

Ч. 2.

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True, they correct them, but only for their good as parents or schoolmasters correct children, in order that they may cease to do evil and behave as is suitable for persons in their station. The Roman master is not allowed, as the Hun is, to punish his slave so as to cause his death. Besides, we have abundant legal provisions in favour of freedom, and this gift may be bestowed not only by men who are in the midst of life, but also by those who are in the article of death. Such persons are allowed to dispose of their property as they please, and any directions of a dying man concerning the enfranchisement of his slaves are binding on his heirs." Thus I reasoned with him. He burst into tears, and said, "The laws are beautiful, and the polity of the Romans is excellent; but the rulers are not like-minded with the men of old, and are pulling down the state into ruin."

The interview with Onégesh.

By the time that this conversation was ended, the household of Onégesh had awoke, and the door was unbarred. Priscus obtained an interview with the minister and delivered the presents, which were graciously received. It is needless to transcribe the memoranda, almost tediously minute, which Priscus has kept of his various conversations. The general drift of them was, on the Roman side, to press for an interview with the king of the Huns, and to urge Onégesh to undertake in person the return embassy, and win for himself eternal glory and much wealth by bringing his candid and impartial mind

to bear upon the points in dispute, and settling them in favour of the Romans. Onégesh indignantly repudiated the idea that any arguments of the Romans could ever induce him to betray his master, to forget his Scythian life, his wives, and his children, or to cease to consider servitude with Attila preferable to wealth among the Romans. He could be far more useful to them, he said, by remaining at Attila's court and mollifying his resentment against their nation, than by coming to Byzantium and negotiating a treaty which his master might very probably disavow. On the other hand, he pressed them repeatedly with the question, 'What man of consular dignity will the Emperor send as ambassador?' The fact that Maximin, a man who had never filled the office of consul, should have been selected as envoy, evidently rankled in the mind of the barbarian king, sensitive, as all upstarts are, about his dignity. And at length, Attila having named three, Nomus, Anatolius, and Senator, any one of whom would be, in the language of modern diplomacy, a *persona grata* at his court, declared that he would receive no one else. The envoys replied that to insist so strongly on the selection of these three men would bring them into suspicion at the Imperial Court; a charming piece of inconsistency in the men who were constantly petitioning that Onégesh and no one else might undertake the return embassy. Attila answered moodily, 'If the Romans will not do as I choose, I shall settle the points in dispute by war.'

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BOOK II.

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448.

Queen
Kreka's
palace.

While diplomacy was thus spinning her tedious web, the ambassadors saw some sights in the barbarian camp which deserved to be recorded by the careful pen of the professor of rhetoric. One day he had an audience of the Queen Kreka, the chief in dignity of the wives of Attila, and mother of three of his sons. Her palace was built of well-sawn and smoothly-planed planks, 'resting on the ends of logs¹.' Arches at certain intervals, springing from the ground and rising to a pretty considerable height, broke the flat surface of the wall². Here Kreka was to be found, lying on a soft couch, and with the floor around her covered with smooth felts to walk upon. Carpets were evidently still an unwonted luxury in Hun-land. There was no trace of the Oriental seclusion of women in the palace of Kreka. A large number of men-servants stood in a circle round her, while her maids sat on the floor in front, and were busied in dying linen of various colours, intending afterwards to work it up into ornamental costumes of the barbarian fashion.

The King
himself.

When Priscus had offered his gifts and emerged from the queen's dwelling, he heard a stir and a clamour, and saw a crowd of men hurrying to the door of Attila's palace. These were the signs that the king was coming forth, and the Professor

¹ The meaning of this clause is not very clear.

² This seems to be the purport of the sentence : *οἱ δὲ κύελοι ἐκ τοῦ ἐδάφους ἀρχόμενοι ἐς ὕψος ἀνέβαινον μετρίως*. But what part arches can have played in an architecture dealing only with planks and logs it is not easy to see.

obtained a good place to watch his exit. With a stately strut Attila came forth, looking this way and that. Then he stood with his favourite Onégesh in front of the palace, while all the multitude of his people who had disputes one with another came forward and submitted them to him for his decision. Having thus in true Oriental fashion administered justice 'in the gate,' he returned into the interior of his palace in order to give audience to some barbarian ambassadors who had just arrived at his court.

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Scarcely was this scene ended when Priscus fell in with the ambassadors of the Western Empire, with whom he naturally began to compare notes. 'Are you dismissed,' said they, 'or pressed to remain?' 'The very thing,' he answered, 'that I myself want to know, and that keeps me all day hanging about near the palisading of Onégesh. Pray has Attila vouchsafed a gentle answer to your petition?' 'No; nothing will turn him from his purpose. He declares he will either have Silvanus or the sacred vessels, or else will make war.' Priscus then expressed his wonder at the folly of the barbarian; and Romulus, who was an old and experienced diplomatist, answered, 'His extraordinary good fortune and unbounded power have quite turned his head: so that he will listen to no argument which does not fall in with his own caprices. For no former ruler of Scythia or of any other land has ever achieved so much in so short a time as this man, who has made himself

The Ambassadors of East and West compare notes.

BOOK II. master of the islands in the ocean, and besides
 CH. 2. ruling all Scythia has forced even the Romans to
 448. pay him tribute.' Then Romulus proceeded to tell
 the story of Attila's intended Persian campaign, to
 which reference has already been made. The
 Byzantine ambassadors expressed their earnest
 desire that he would turn his arms against Persia
 and leave Theodosius alone; but Constantiolus,
 a Pannonian in the retinue of Romulus, replied
 that he feared if Attila did attack and overcome,
 as he assuredly would, the monarch of that country,
 'he would become our lord and master instead of
 our friend. At present,' said he, 'Attila conde-
 scends to take gold from the Romans and call it
pay for his titular office of General in the Roman
 armies. But should he subdue the Parthians, and
 Medes, and Persians, he would not endure to have
 the Roman Empire cutting in like a wedge between
 one part and another of his dominions, but would
 openly treat the two Emperors as mere lacqueys,
 and would lay upon them such commands as they
 would find absolutely intolerable. Already he has
 been heard to remark, testily, 'The generals of
 Theodosius are but his servants, while my generals
 are as good as emperors of Rome.' He believes
 also that there will be before long some notable in-
 crease of his power; and that the gods have signi-
 fied this by revealing to him the sword of Mars, a
 sacred relic much venerated by the Huns, for many
 years hidden from their eyes, but quite lately re-
 discovered by the trail of the blood of an ox which

had wounded its hoof against it, as it was sticking upright in the long grass¹.

BOOK II.
CH. 2.

Such was the conversation between the representatives of Ravenna and Constantinople, amid the log-huts of the Hungarian plain. Later on in the same day they all received an invitation to be present at a banquet of the great conqueror.

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‘Punctually at three o’clock we, together with the ambassadors of the Western Romans, went to the dinner and stood on the threshold of Attila’s palace. According to the custom of the country, the cup-bearers brought us a bowl of wine, that we might drink and pray for the good-luck of our host before sitting down. Having tasted the bowl, we were escorted to our seats. Chairs were ranged for the guests all round the walls. In the centre Attila reclined on a couch, and behind him a flight of steps led up to his bed, which, hidden by curtains of white linen and variegated stuffs tastefully arranged, looked like the nuptial bed, as the Greeks and Romans prepare it, for a newly-wedded couple.

The banquet in Attila’s palace.

‘The seat of honour, on the right hand of Attila’s couch, was occupied by Onégesh. We did not receive even the second place, that on his left, but saw Berich, a Hun of noble birth, placed above us there. Opposite to Onégesh, on a double chair², sat two of the sons of Attila. His eldest son sat on the king’s

Order of precedence.

¹ Compare the worship of a naked sabre fixed hilt-downwards in the earth, as practised by the Alani (see p. 33).

² Δίππος.

BOOK II. couch, not near to him, however, but on the very
 CH. 2. edge of it, and all through the banquet he kept his
 448. eyes fixed on the ground in silent awe of his father.

The toasts. 'When we were all seated the cup-bearer came in and handed to Attila his ivy-wood drinking-cup, filled with wine. Remaining seated, the king saluted the one nearest to him in rank. The slave standing behind that person's chair advanced into the centre of the hall, received the cup from the hand of Attila's cup-bearer, and brought it to the guest, whom etiquette required to rise from his seat and continue standing till he had drained the cup and the slave had returned it into the hands of Attila's cup-bearer.' This process of salutation and drinking was gone through with each guest and in the intervals of every course. The length of the solemnity, and perhaps the tediousness of it, seem greatly to have impressed the mind of Priscus, who describes it in much detail. Possibly the classical custom of drinking healths had gone out of fashion at Byzantium. The Teutonic nations had it, and it may have been adopted from them by the Huns. It was indeed one well worthy of acceptance among an uncivilized people, but, as here described by Priscus, it lacked its most barbarous element. The Speech, that instrument of torture for speaker and hearers, was absent; not even the cruel ingenuity of the Hun inflicted that misery on his guests. After the banqueters had all been 'saluted' by Attila, the servants began to bring in the provisions,

which were set upon little tables, one for every three or four guests, so that each could help himself without going outside the row of seats. 'For all the rest of the barbarians,' says Priscus, 'and for us, a costly banquet had been prepared, which was served on silver dishes; but Attila, on his wooden plate, had nothing else save meat. In all his other surroundings he showed the same simple tastes. The other banqueters had drinking cups of gold and silver handed to them, but his was of wood. His clothes were quite plain, distinguished by their cleanness only from those of any common man: and neither the sword which was hung up beside him, nor the clasps of his shoes (shaped in the barbarian fashion), nor the bridle of his horse, was adorned, as is the case with other Scythians, with gold or jewels, or anything else that is costly.

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'When evening came on, torches were lighted, and two barbarians coming in, stood opposite to Attila and chanted verses in praise of his victories and his prowess in war. The banqueters, looking off from the festal board, gazed earnestly on the minstrels. Some gave themselves to the mere delight of the song; others, remembering past conflicts, were stirred as with the fury of battle; while the old men were melted into tears by the thought that their bodies were grown weak through time, and their hot hearts were compelled into repose.' After tears laughter, and after the tragedy a farce. A mad Hun next came in, who by his senseless babble made all the guests laugh

Minstrelsy.

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Bleda's
fool.

heartily. Then entered a Moorish dwarf named Zercon, hump-backed, club-footed, with a nose like a monkey's. Almost the only anecdote¹ that is preserved to us about Bleda, Attila's brother, records the inextinguishable mirth which this strange creature used to awaken in him, how he had him always by his side at the battle and in the banquet, and how when at last the unlucky dwarf tried to make his escape together with some other fugitives, Bleda disregarded all the others, and devoted his whole energies to the recapture of the pigmy. Then when he was caught and brought into the royal presence, Bleda burst into another storm of merriment at seeing the queer little creature in the dignity of chains. He questioned him about the cause of his flight: the dwarf replied that he knew he had done wrong, but there was some excuse for him because he could get no wife in Hun-land. More delicious laughter followed, and Bleda straightway provided him with a wife in the person of a Hunnish damsel of noble birth who had been maid of honour to his queen, but had fallen into disgrace and been banished from her presence. After Bleda's death, Attila, who could not abide the dwarf, sent him as a present to Aetius. He had now come back again, apparently to beg to have his wife restored to him, a prayer which Attila was not inclined to grant.

¹ This anecdote is preserved by Suidas. The commentator Valesius thinks he took it from a portion of the history of Priscus now lost to us: but there are some slight divergences in the story which seem to point to a different conclusion.

This strange being came into the banquet-hall, and by his grotesque appearance, his odd garb, his stuttering voice, and his wild promiscuous jumble of words, Latin, Hunnish, Gothic, hurled forth pell-mell in unutterable confusion, set every table in a roar. Only Attila laughed not; not a line in his rigid countenance changed till his youngest son Ernak came, laughing like everybody else, and sat down beside him. He did not shrink away like his elder brother and sit on the edge of the couch. His bright, happy eyes looked up into the face of his father, who gently pinched his cheek and looked back upon him with a mild and softened gaze. Priscus expressed aloud his wonder that the youngest son should be so obviously preferred to his elder brethren: whereupon one of the barbarians who sat near him, and who understood Latin, whispered to him confidentially that it had been foretold to Attila by the prophets that the falling fortunes of his house should by this son be restored.

The drinking-bout was protracted far on into the night, and the ambassadors left long before it was over. At daybreak next morning they again sought an interview with Onégesh, and petitioned that without further loss of time they might receive Attila's answer and return to their master. Onégesh set his secretaries, Roman captives, to work at the composition of the letter of reply. Then they preferred another request, for the liberation of the widow and children of a certain Sulla, a citizen

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Affair of
the family
of Sulla.

BOOK II. of Ratiaria¹, who had apparently been killed at the
 CH. 2.
 448. same time when they were taken captive and their home destroyed. Onégesh entirely refused to hear of their gratuitous liberation, but at length, when the ambassadors begged him to reflect on their former prosperity, and to pity their present misfortunes, he laid the matter before Attila, and obtained a reluctant consent to send the children back as a present to Theodosius. As to the widow the Hun remained inexorable : the price of her freedom was fixed at £500. Such abject entreaties to a squalid barbarian for the liberation of the family of a Roman bearing the name of him 'whose chariot rolled on Fortune's wheel, Triumphant Sulla,' seem to intensify the force of Byron's magnificent apostrophe—

'Couldst thou divine
 To what would one day dwindle that which made
 Thee more than mortal, or that so supine
 By else than Romans Rome could e'er be laid.
 She who was named Eternal, and arrayed
 Her warriors but to conquer, she who veiled
 Earth with her haughty shadow, and displayed,
 Till the o'ercanopied horizon failed,
 Her rushing wings—oh, she who was almighty hailed !'

Another visit to Attila's chief wife ² beguiled the tedium of the ambassadors' sojourn in the royal village. 'She received us,' says Priscus, 'both with honeyed words and with an elaborate repast. And each of the company wishing to do us honour in Scythian fashion, arose and presented us with a full cup of

¹ Now Arzar Palanka on the Danube.

² Here called Recan : apparently the same name as the Kreka of whom we have already heard (p. 90).

wine; and when we had drank it they put their arms round us and kissed us, and then received it back from our hands.'

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448.

A final supper with Attila himself followed. The monarch seems to have had an increasing appreciation of the worth and honesty of Maximin: and now that the 'shameless beast,' Vigilas, was gone, and Attila no longer had the unpleasant sensation of stabbedness which was always suggested by his false smile and cringing salutation, the companionship of the Roman ambassadors agreeably diversified the monotony of the barbarian carousals. This time the relative who shared his royal divan was not one of his sons but Oébarsh, his uncle. Attila treated the ambassadors during this meal with great politeness, but at the same time frequently reminded them of a grievance which for the moment absorbed all his thoughts, to the exclusion of the Hunnish refugees and the vases of Sirmium. Aetius, who was continually sending presents to the Hunnish monarch or receiving them from him, had consigned to him, perhaps in exchange for the Moorish dwarf, a Latin secretary, named Constantius. This secretary, the second of that name who had entered Attila's service, was eager, like all the adventurers who hovered on the confines between barbarism and civilization, to consolidate his position by marrying one of the 'enormously wealthy' heiresses who were to be found among the Romans. Such an one seemed to be within his grasp when he

Last banquet with Attila.

The fortune-hunting Secretary.

¹ ζαπλούτων.



BOOK II. was sent a few years before as an embassy to Constantinople, and when he succeeded in smoothing some of the negotiations between Theodosius and the Hun. The Emperor, a facile promiser, undertook to bestow upon the secretary the hand of the daughter of Saturninus, a man of high lineage and fortune, who held the office of *Comes Domesticorum*. Shortly after, however, Eudocia the Empress revenged herself on Saturninus for having, in obedience to her husband's commands, put two favourite ecclesiastics of hers to death, by sending him to join them. The fortunes of the house of Saturninus declined, and a powerful general, Zeno, bestowed the daughter of the fallen minister in marriage on one of his creatures named Rufus. The disappointed secretary, Constantius, who had doubtless boasted not a little of the 'enormously wealthy' bride that was to be assigned to him, besieged the ear of Attila with his clamours, and even promised him money if he would still obtain for him one of the longed-for heiresses. All through this banquet therefore Attila urged the fortune-hunter's claims upon Maximin, saying repeatedly, 'Constantius must not be disappointed. It is not right for kings to tell lies¹.'

Three days after this banquet the ambassadors from the Eastern Court, after receiving presents which Priscus acknowledges to have been 'suitable,' were at length dismissed under the escort of Berich,

¹ Compare the words of Aspar to the Emperor Leo I, some twenty years after this time: 'Emperor, he who is clothed with this purple robe should not be a deceiver.'

the Hunnish nobleman who had sat above them at their first repast in Attila's presence. It is singular that we hear nothing as to the success or failure of the Embassy of the West.

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448.

The return journey of Maximin and Priscus was not marked by any striking adventures. They saw a Scythian refugee, who had crossed the Danube and returned into his own country as a spy, subjected to the cruel punishment of impalement, common among these Turanian nations. And two Scythian slaves who had murdered their masters were put to death by crucifixion, a mode of execution which the Christian Empire, from religious rather than humane sentiment, had by this time abandoned. But the only other incidents of their journey were caused by the testy and capricious humour of their companion Berich, who seemed bent on picking a quarrel with them. His ill-temper was chiefly shewn by his violent resumption of the horse which, at Attila's command, he had presented to Maximin. Indeed all the Hunnish nobility had been ordered to make tender of their horses to the ambassador ; but he had shewn the wise moderation of his character by accepting only a few. Among these few however was Berich's ; and considering the centaur-like union which had for generations existed between the Huns and their steeds, we may conjecture that it was the pain of daily beholding his favourite horse bestridden by an unwarlike stranger which caused the irritability of the Hunnish nobleman.

Return
journey
of the am-
bassadors.

Sulkiness
of their
Hunnish
colleague.

BOOK II. ^{CH. 2.} Vigilas had started from Constantinople before
 448. the return of the ambassadors, and met them on
 Vigilas arrested, their road. They communicated to him the final
 answer of the barbarian, and he continued his route.
 As soon as he reached the camp of Attila, a detach-
 ment of Huns, who had been watching for his
 arrival, made him their prisoner, and took from
 him the £2000 which he was bringing, as he sup-
 posed, to Edecon as the price of blood. They
 carried him at once before the king, who enquired
 why he travelled with so much money about him.
 'To provide for my own wants and those of my
 attendants,' said Vigilas, 'lest by any mischance
 my embassy should lack its proper splendour. Also
 for the redemption of captives, as many persons in
 the Roman territory have begged me to purchase
 the liberation of their kinsfolk.' 'Evil beast!' said
 Attila, 'thou in truth shalt not blind Justice by all
 thy quibbles, and no pretext shall be strong enough
 to enable thee to escape punishment. Thou hast
 provided far more money than could possibly be
 wanted for the purchase of beasts of burden and
 for the redemption of captives, which last I expressly
 forbade thee to undertake when thou camest hither
 with Maximin.'

and com-
 pelled to
 confess.

With these words he signalled to his attendants
 to seize the son of Vigilas, who had for the first
 time accompanied his father on this journey. 'Next
 moment,' said Attila, 'hew him down with the
 sword, unless his father will say to whom and for
 what purpose he has brought this money into my

territory.' Vigilas burst into passionate lamentations, begged the executioner to slay him instead of his son, and when he saw that all was of no avail, confessed the whole plot, told how Chrysaphius had originated it, how Edecon had accepted it, how Theodosius had sanctioned it, and then once more earnestly entreated Attila to put *him* to death and to spare his son. The king, who from his previous information knew that Vigilas had now disclosed the whole truth, coldly replied that for the present he should be loaded with chains and await, in close confinement, the return of his son who must start at once for Constantinople to obtain another sum of £2000¹, which, with that already taken from him, should constitute their joint ransom.

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CH. 2.
448.

Leaving Vigilas in this dangerous predicament, let us now see what kind of messages Theodosius had to listen to from the King of the Huns. Maximin seems to have been instructed to dwell principally on the Emperor's breach of promise to Constantius. 'No one,' Attila argued, 'could have dared to betroth the daughter of Saturninus to another than Constantius without the Emperor's consent. For either he who had presumed to do such a deed would have suffered condign punishment, or else the affairs of the Emperor were in such a state that he could not manage his own servants,

Attila's
message to
Theodosius

¹ Mr. Herbert (*Attila*, p. 417) inadvertently raises this ransom to the enormous figure of £20,000, by calling it 500 lbs. of gold. The words of Priscus are clear, πενήκοντα λίτρας χρυσού.

BOOK II. against whom therefore, if he desired it, Attila
CH. 2. would be ready to grant him the advantage of his alli-

448.

ance.' The taunt, which must surely have proceeded from the lips of Berich, not of Maximin, struck home; and Theodosius showed his anger by confiscating the fortune of the 'enormously wealthy' young lady whose matrimonial affairs had caused him so much annoyance. This act was of course followed by a loud outcry from her husband Rufus and his patron Zeno, whose position towards his imperial master was in fact pretty accurately described by the sneers of Attila. Zeno chose however to attribute the whole incident to the machinations of Chrysaphius, and began to clamour for the eunuch's life.

449.

A still more
 insulting
 message
 brought by
 Orestes.

Such was the position of affairs at Constantinople when the two special ambassadors of Attila, Orestes and Esclas, arrived. Their message was yet harder to digest than that which had preceded it. When they appeared in the imperial presence, Orestes wore, suspended round his neck, the purse (or rather the large bag) in which the blood-money had been packed. Turning first to Theodosius and then to the Eunuch, he asked each of them : 'Dost thou recognise this bag?' Then Esclas, the Hun, took up his parable, and said roundly¹, 'Theodosius is the son of a well-born father. Attila too from his father Mundzuk has inherited the condition of noble birth, which *he* has preserved. Not so Theodosius, who fell from the

¹ ἀπὸ στόματος.

estate of an *ingenuus* and became Attila's slave, when he submitted to pay him tribute. He has now conspired against the life of a better man than himself, and one whom Fortune has made his master. This is a foul deed, worthy only of a caitiff slave, and his only way of clearing himself from the guilt which he has thus contracted is to surrender the Eunuch to punishment.'

BOOK 11.

CH. 2.

449.

How this harangue, every word of which had been composed by Attila himself, was received by Theodosius, as he sat surrounded by his courtiers, we know not. The general expectation of the Court was that it would go hard with Chrysaphius, whose punishment was thus simultaneously demanded by the two men whom the Emperor most feared, Zeno his general, and Attila his torment. But 'threatened men live long,' and the Eunuch seems to have been not unpopular with the other courtiers, who exerted themselves zealously for his deliverance.

Anatolius and Nomus were selected as the new ambassadors to the Hunnish Court. Both had been named by Attila¹ as persons of sufficiently exalted rank to visit him, such as he would be willing to welcome. Anatolius, who had been the chief figure of the embassy of 447, was a man of high military rank, in fact, general of the household troops². Nomus, a patrician as well as his colleague, was in the civil service as Master of the Offices, renowned

Embassy
of Anato-
lius and
Nomus.

¹ See p. 89.

² ἀρχων τελών τῶν ἀμφὶ βασιλεία = Magister Militum praesentalis.

BOOK II. not only for his wealth, but for his willingness to
 CH. 2. spend it lavishly, and moreover kindly disposed
 449. towards Chrysaphius. They were commissioned
 to employ money freely, to deprecate Attila's re-
 sentment against the Eunuch, and to assure Con-
 stantius that he should yet have a wealthy Roman
 bride, though the law would not permit the Em-
 peror to give him the daughter of Saturninus, as
 she was married to another man from whom she
 did not desire to be divorced. The trifling circum-
 stance of the confiscation of her property appears
 not to have been mentioned in the instructions of
 the ambassadors.

Success
 of the
 Embassy.

This embassy was a complete success. Attila came as far as the river Drave ¹, in order to testify his respect for the persons of the envoys, and to spare them the fatigue of too long a journey. At first his speech was full of arrogance and wrath, but when he saw the beautiful things which the ambassadors had brought for him, the presents of Theodosius, the presents of Chrysaphius, the presents of the lavish Nomus, the child-nature in the heart of the barbarian asserted itself, his eyes gleamed with pleasure, and he suffered himself to be mollified by their gentle words. Peace was concluded pretty nearly on the old terms: in fact, he seems even to have surrendered his claim to the belt of territory, five days' journey wide, south of the Danube. He promised to worry the Emperor no more about any refugees whom he might have

¹ A conjectural translation of *Δρέκων*.

received in past times ; 'only,' he said, 'Theodosius must receive no more of these men in future.'

BOOK 11.

CH. 2.

Vigilas was liberated, his son having brought the appointed £2000 of ransom ; and the demand for the head of Chrysaphius seems to have been quietly withdrawn¹. Of his own accord, in order to mark his special esteem for Anatolius and Nomus, he liberated many captives without ransom ; and he made them presents of several horses (whether belonging to himself or to his courtiers we are not informed), and of the skins of wild beasts, 'such as the royal family among the Scythians wear by way of ornament.' For once, diplomacy really prevented war.

449.

The important question of satisfying the noble longings of Constantius for a wealthy bride was soon solved. He returned with the ambassadors to Constantinople, and was there mated to a lady of very high birth and large fortune, the widow of a certain Armatius, who had died when on service against some of the fierce tribes of Libya, and the daughter-in-law of Plinthas (Consul 419), who had headed the first Embassy to Attila in the year 433. Thus the last point in dispute between the son of Mundzuk and the son of Arcadius was disposed of.

An heiress
found for
Attila's
secretary.

¹ Thierry (*Attila*, i. 126) says, in describing this interview, 'Il délivra Vigilas, . . . mais il exigea la tête de Chrysaphius. Sur ce point il fut inflexible.' I do not find any evidence in Priscus in support of this statement ; and the fact that Attila received, apparently, the eunuch's presents, seems to render it very improbable.

BOOK II. In the following year (450) Theodosius II died
 CH. 2. in the 50th year of his age and the 43rd of his
 450. reign. His death was the result of an accident in
 Death of Theodosius II. hunting, his horse having run away, swerved aside
 into a stream and threw him off. He was carried
 home to his palace in a litter, but he had received
 a fatal injury to the spine, and he died on the
 following night (July 28, 450). He left no male
 offspring, and his sister Pulcheria ascended the
 throne, which she shared with a brave and honest
 soldier, Marcian, whom, for the good of the state,
 she consented to call her husband.

Accession
of Marcian.

Chrysa-
phius put
to death

Brave
words of
Apollonius.

The immediate results of this change were, the
 calling together of the Council of Chalcedon, at
 which the orthodox Roman view of the union of
 the two natures in Christ was finally adopted ;
 the execution of Chrysaphius, whether as malad-
 ministrator, as Eutychian heretic, or as private foe
 to the new Augusta, we are not informed ; and,
 lastly, the assumption of an altered and more
 manly tone in reply to the intolerable pretensions
 of Attila. When that monarch sent to claim his
 arrears of tribute, the new Emperor sent as am-
 bassador to his court, Apollonius, the brother of
 that Rufus who had married the 'enormously
 wealthy' bride, for whose fortune Constantius
 had languished. Apollonius crossed the Danube,
 but when Attila learned that he had not brought
 the tribute, which—to use the words of the Hun—
 'had been promised to him by better and more

king-like men¹ than the present ambassador,' he refused to grant him an audience. Attila said expressly that he acted thus in order to show his contempt for the envoy, whom, nevertheless, he ordered, on pain of death if he refused, to hand over the presents which the Emperor had sent. 'Not so,' said Apollonius, who spoke with a boldness worthy of old Rome, and in a tone which was now strange to Scythian ears. 'The Huns may kill me if they like, and then my presents will be spoils of war (if they choose to call murder warfare). Or they may receive me as ambassador, and then I willingly offer my gifts. But if not admitted to an audience, I do not part with these presents while I live.' The boldness of the ambassador prevailed. He returned with his gifts and his message alike undelivered, but Attila saw that he had now at length men to deal with at Constantinople, and that the policy of Bunkum (if the word may be pardoned) would avail no longer. He did not care for a campaign in the often-harried plains of Moesia, but looked out for some richer if not easier prey. And thus, with a dignity which we had ceased to hope for in any Emperor of Byzantium, the long negotiations terminate, and we close the chapter of the doings of Attila in the East.

BOOK II.
CH. 2.
450.

¹ Anatolius and Nomus.

CHAPTER III.

ATTILA IN GAUL.

Authorities.

Sources:—

BOOK II.

CH. 3.

AT the outset we derive a little further information as to Attila's embassies from PRISCUS, but our chief source is again JORNANDES (or Jordanes) 'De Rebus Geticis' described in the previous volume. It is only necessary to repeat that this writer, an Ostrogoth by birth, gives everywhere the *Gothic* version of the facts which he describes, that he wrote a century after the events with which we are now concerned, that his style is declamatory and his chronology often inaccurate. But on the other hand, CASSIODORUS (468 to about 565), upon whose work that of Jornandes is grounded, was born only fifteen years after the death of Attila; and the reference to PRISCUS in the thirty-fifth chapter of the book, 'De Rebus Geticis,' shows that Jornandes had read that history the fragments of which we have found so valuable. The chapters relating to the invasion of Gaul and the battle of Chalons, rise to a far higher level of literary merit than the rest of the history, and seem to have something of the vividness and picturesqueness of contemporary narration.

APOLLINARIS SIDONIUS, the Gaulish nobleman, wit and bishop, whose relation to the politics of the time will be found pourtrayed in the third chapter of the third book of this history, writes about the events of this year in his usual declamatory style. He lived 430-488, and was therefore twenty-one years old at the time of Attila's invasion of Gaul. I quote from Gregoire and Collombet's edition of his works in three vols. : Lyons 1836.

GREGORY of Tours, who wrote his History of the Franks

about 590, supplies some meagre details about Attila's invasion. BOOK II.
CH. 3.

The Bollandist *ACTA SANCTORUM*, in the lives of St. Genevieve, St. Lupus, and St. Anianus, give further details of a more or less legendary character. A student who should possess sufficient patience and discrimination to winnow the wheat from the chaff in the vast mass of ecclesiastical literature collected by the Bollandists, would bestow a great service on the history of the Middle Ages.

The Panegyric of Aetius, attributed to a Spanish poet named *MEROBAUDES*, and edited by Niebuhr, contains some interesting hints as to the life of Aetius previous to the year 446 (the date of the poem), but in its extremely fragmentary state it is difficult to extract much solid historical material from it. The imitation of Claudian's style is obvious.

A STORY of very doubtful authority¹ represents the monarch of the Huns as sending, shortly before the death of Theodosius II, a Gothic messenger to each of the two Roman Emperors, with this insulting mandate, 'Attila, thy master and mine, bids thee to prepare a palace for his reception.' Whether any such message was actually sent or not, the story indicates not inaptly the attitude which the great Hun maintained for the ten years between 440 and 450, hovering like a hawk over the fluttered dove-cots of Byzantium and Ravenna, and enjoying the terrors of the Eastern and the Western Augustus alternately.

Now that the palace by the Bosphorus was occu-

¹ The story rests only on the authority of the Alexandrian Chronicle and John Malalas. The former was composed during the reign of Heraclius, about 630; the date of the latter historian is uncertain, not earlier, however, than 600, and not later than 900.

BOOK II.
CH. 3.

pied by an inmate whose beak and claw looked more like those of the old Roman eagle than any that had been seen there for the last half-century, the Barbarian began to turn his thoughts more definitely to the hapless pigeon of the West. He needed to be at no loss for pretexts in making war on Rome. Whether the great grievance of the communion-plate of Sirmium was still unredressed we cannot say, for History, after wearying us with the details of this paltry affair, forgets to tell us how it ended, whether the vases were surrendered to the service of the king or the silversmith to his rage, or whether the latter was deemed to be 'a bona-fide holder of the goods for valuable consideration,' and his title respected accordingly.

But the grievances of the Princess Honoria undoubtedly still remained, possibly even were increased by the death of the easy-tempered Theodosius and the accession to the Byzantine throne of that severe model of feminine virtues, the Augusta Pulcheria, who was now fifty-one years of age, while her cousin was but thirty-two, a juniority which was in itself almost treason against a female sovereign. It is possible that the unhappy princess was removed at this time from the Eastern to the Western court, for we find Attila sending one of his usual insulting embassies to Valentinian III, 'to say that Honoria, whom he had betrothed to himself, must suffer no harm, and that he would avenge her cause if she were not also allowed to wield the imperial sceptre.' The Western Emperor replied 'that Honoria

could not enter into the married state with him, BOOK 11.
CH. 3.
having been already given to a husband' (to whom, 450.
when, or under what circumstances, we are not informed); and they met the audacious claim set up on behalf of the princess by an equally audacious misstatement of their own customs, daring to assert in the face of the still-existing royalty of Placidia and Pulcheria, 'that Honorio ought not to receive the sceptre, since the succession to the throne among the Romans was vested not in females, but in males.' Both parties probably felt that the claim was an unreal one: the Hun was determined on war, and would have it, whether he redeemed the ring of Honorio or no. One more embassy takes place, in which Attila prefers the modest claim to one half of the Western Empire, 'as the betrothed husband of Honorio, who had received this portion from her father, and was wrongfully kept out of it by her brother's covetousness.' This request is of course refused. Then Honorio too, like the vases of Sirinium, fades out of history; whether she ever saw the fierce face of her affianced, when he wasted Italy in her name, nay even whether she was present at the death-bed of her mother Placidia, who expired at Rome in the following year (451), and there received and conferred a mutual forgiveness, we know not.

Two more pretexts for war must Attila accumulate, or at least two more alliances must he conclude, and then all would be ready for his great westward movement.

One was with a Frankish prince. A certain king

BOOK II.
CH. 3.

450.
Alliance
with a
Frankish
prince.

of the Franks, whose name is not recorded, had just died, and there was strife between his sons as to the succession to his rude royalty. The younger son was the candidate whom the Romans favoured. He had been to Rome (probably some years before) on an embassy from his father. He had gazed there, doubtless, on the still undiminished glories of the Palatine and the Forum, and the great Flavian Amphitheatre, and while he gazed the observant eye of the rhetorician Priscus, who happened to be at Rome, likewise had gazed on him. A young warrior, with not even the first down of manhood on cheek or lip, but with a cloud of yellow hair descending thickly upon his shoulders, such is the appearance of the first Frankish king whom we meet with in history. Whether he was Meroveus himself¹, the half-mythical ancestor of the Merovingian dynasty, may be doubted, and cannot now be ascertained; but that long tawny *chevelure* identifies him with the race who reigned in France for 250 years, till the hair of the last *fainéant* king fell beneath the scissors of Pepin.

This young Frankish chief was regarded by the all-powerful Aetius with favour. He loaded him with presents, conferred upon him the title of his

¹ Meroveus is the so-called grandson of Pharamond and grandfather of Clovis; but no names of the Frankish kings before Childeric, father of Clovis, are now accepted as thoroughly historical. The silence of Gregory of Tours as to some of these earlier kings and the hesitating way in which he speaks of others seem almost conclusive against the pretension of the medieval genealogists to trace their names and pedigree. (See Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, i. 177.)

adopted son, and sent him back to his father as the bearer of a treaty of friendship and alliance. It may have been this title of adopted son of the great Aetius which suggested ambitious thoughts to the mind of the young prince. At any rate, on the death of his father, he, though the younger son, with Roman help, made good his claim to the succession to the kingdom. His elder brother fled to the court of Attila, who undertook to recover for him his lost inheritance.

BOOK II.
CH. 3.
459.

The other alliance of Attila was with Gaiseric, king of the Vandals. This monarch, whose career we shall have to trace in the following chapter, was now undisputed master of the whole Roman province of Africa, had ravaged Sicily, and was making the name of Carthage, his capital city, as terrible to Italian hearts as ever it had been in the days of Hannibal. There can be little doubt that if the Hunnish hordes by land, and the Vandal pirates by sea, had simultaneously attacked the Western Empire, they must have achieved a complete and crushing success. But for some reason or other, perhaps because neither nation wished to share so rich a booty with a rival, this united action was not taken; and though the Hunnish king received large sums of money by way of subsidy from the Vandal, it may be doubted whether he did not lose far more than he gained by an alliance which made him accessory after the fact to a cruel and impolitic outrage. For Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, who was at this time far the most powerful ruler in the Gaulish

BOOK II. provinces, had bestowed his daughter in marriage
 CH. 3. on Hunneric, the son of Gaiseric. Gaiseric chose
 450. to suspect, apparently on very trifling grounds, that the new bride had attempted to poison him; and with a cruelty which was characteristic of the Vandal nature, and which (if it be not too fanciful a suggestion) may perhaps be partly explained by their rapid migration from the foggy shores of the Baltic to the lands baked by the torrid sun of Africa, he cut off the nose and ears of the Visigothic princess, and in this condition sent her back to the palace of Theodoric, a living and daily remembrancer of the vengeance due to the Vandal, and therefore an argument against any co-operation with Attila, who was that Vandal's friend.

One more, not ally, but summons to war must be mentioned, which may perhaps have assisted powerfully in turning the hosts of Attila towards Gaul rather than towards Italy. The iniquities of judges and the exactions of tax-gatherers, which were so loudly complained of by the barbarianised Roman in the camp of Attila, had in Gaul stirred up the peasants to a tumultuary war not unlike that which the medieval knights termed a *Jacquerie*. The name given to the peasant warriors with whom we are now concerned was *Bagaudae*¹; and their insurrection, a striking proof

¹ The authorities quoted by Ducange (*Glossarium*, s. v. *Bagaudae*) imply that the name was of Celtic origin and meant 'robbers' or 'native oppressors.' He suggests a derivation from *Bagat*, which, he says, is the Welsh for a mob of men, and the Breton for a flock or herd. The monastery of Fossat (?), four

of the hollowness of the fabric of Roman prosperity, had smouldered for more than a century and a half, ever since the days of Diocletian. A man, of whom we would gladly know more than the few lines which the chroniclers bestow on him, was the link between these marauders within the Empire and the great Barbarian without. In the year 448, as we learn from the Pseudo-Prosper, 'Eudoxius, a doctor by profession, a man of evil, though cultivated intellect, being mixed up with the movements of the Bagaudae at that time, fled to the Huns¹.' It is probable enough that we have here to do with a mere selfish adventurer such as float ever upon the surface of revolutionary change: yet before condemning the man of 'evil though highly-cultured intellect,' who flashes thus for a moment upon the page of history, we would gladly have known whe-

BOOK II.
Сн. 3.
45^a

miles from Paris, was called in the time of Charles le Chauve, *Castrum Bagaudarum*. Salvian (*De Gubernatione Dei*, v. 6) draws a striking picture of the judicial and fiscal iniquities which had driven men into the ranks of the Bagaudae (as he spells the word), '*De Bagaudis nunc mihi sermo est: qui per malos iudices et cruentos spoliati, afflicti, necati, postquam jus Romanæ libertatis amiserant, etiam honorem Romani nominis perdiderunt. Et imputatur his infelicitas sua? Imputamus his nomen calamitatis suae? Imputamus nomen, quod ipsi fecimus? Et vocamus rebelles? Vocamus perditos, quos esse compulimus criminosos? Quibus enim aliis rebus Bagaudae facti sunt, nisi iniquitatibus nostris, nisi improbitatibus iudicum, nisi eorum præscriptionibus, et rapinis, qui exactionis publicæ nomen in questus proprii emolumenta verterunt et indictiones tributarias prædas suas esse fecerunt.*'

¹ 'Eudoxius arte medicus, pravi sed exercitati ingenii, in Bagauda id temporis mota delatus, ad Chunnos confugit' (Prosper Tiro *Chronicon*, Theodosius, a. 25).

BOOK II. ther he too may not have been in his day an apostle
CH. 3. of 'the Enthusiasm of Humanity,' whether the
450. miseries which Eudoxius' '*arte medicus*' saw among
 the pillaged peasants of Gaul were not the original
 cause of his being condemned as a 'Bagauda' by
 delicately-living senators and prefects, and forced
 to appeal against the injustices of civilization at
 the bar of its terrible antagonist.

451. At length, in the spring of 451, the preparations
The army of Attila moves westwards. of Attila were completed, and the huge host began
 to roll on its way towards the Rhine. This army,
 like those which modern science has created, and
 under which modern industry groans, was truly
 described as a nation rather than an army; and
 though the estimates of the chroniclers, which vary
 from half a million to seven hundred thousand
 men, cannot be accepted as literally accurate, we
 shall not err in believing that the vast multitude
 who looked to the tent of Attila for orders were
 practically innumerable. Sidonius describes how
 the quiet life of the Roman provincial senator was
 suddenly disturbed by the roar of a mighty multi-
 tude, when barbarism seemed to be pouring over
 the plains of Gaul all the inhabitants of the
 North. If his enumeration of the invading tribes,
 which no doubt partakes of some of the vagueness
 of his style of poetry, be at all correct, the Geloni
The nationalities which composed it. from the shores of the Volga, the Neuri and
 Bastarnae from the Ukraine, the Sciri, whom we
 are in doubt whether to place near Riga on the
 Baltic or Odessa on the Euxine, were serving in

that army. The ethnological affinities of these obscure tribes are very doubtful. Some of them may have been of Slavonic origin. The Teutonic family was represented by the Rugii from Pomerania, the Bructeri from the Weser ; one half of the Frankish people from 'the turbid Neckar ;' the Thuringians (Toringi) from Bavaria, and the Burgundians—these too only a portion of the tribe who had lingered in their old homes by the Vistula. The bone and marrow of the army were of course the Huns themselves, and the two powerful Teutonic tribes, enemies to the Hun in the past and to be his enemies in the future, but for the present his faithful allies and counsellors, the Gepidae and the Ostrogoths. Thus if we go back to the old story of the Gothic migration from 'the island of Sweden,' we have the crews of two of the ships being led on to attack their fellows in the other vessel, the Ostrogoths and the 'torpid' Gepidae marching right across Europe at the bidding of a leader whose forefathers came from Siberia to overwhelm their Visigothic brethren, who are dwelling by the Garonne¹. The Ostrogoths, who

BOOK II.
CH. 3.
451.

¹ The lines of Apollinaris Sidonius which enumerate the nations at Attila's disposal are these—

'Subito cum rupta tumultu

Barbaries totas in te transfuderat arctos,
Gallia ; pugnacem Rugum comitante Gelono
Gepida trux sequitur ; Scyrum Burgundio cogit,
Chunus, Bellonotus, Neurus, Basterna, Toringus,
Bructerus, ulvosâ quem vel Nicer abluit undâ
Prorumpit Francus.'—(Panegyric of Avitus, 319–325.)

It is singular that he makes no mention of the Ostrogoths. 'Bellonotus' seems to be the name of some tribe not yet identi-

BOOK II. probably occupied a territory not far from Gallicia
 CH. 3. and Moravia, were commanded by three brothers,
 451. sprung from the great Amal lineage, Walamir and
 Theudemir and Widemir ; 'nobler,' as the patriotic
 Jornandes observes, 'than the king whose orders
 they obeyed.' The Gepidae, whose land probably
 bordered on the northern confines of the Ostrogothic
 settlement, were led to battle by Arderic, bravest and
 most famous of all the subject-princes, and him on
 whose wise and loyal counsels Attila chiefly relied.

While this vast medley of nations are hewing
 down the trees of the Thuringer Wald, in order to
 fashion their rude boats and rafts for the passage
 of the Rhine¹, let us glance for a moment at the
 tribes, scarcely less various and not so coherent,
 which, on the Gaulish side of the river, are awaiting
 their dreaded impact.

Tribes in-
 habiting
 Gaul.

Franks.

Near the mouths of the Rhine, the Scheldt, and
 the Somme, that is to say, in the modern countries
 of Belgium and Picardy, clustered the great con-
 federacy of the Salian Franks. Their Ripuarian
 brethren held the upper reaches of the Great
 River, and it is to these probably that Sidonius
 refers when he places them by the turbid Neckar,
 and describes them as furnishing a contingent to

fied. The Geloni are probably only inserted because their name
 fits in nicely into a hexameter and has a classical ring about it,
 as having been used by Horace.

So Sidonius—

'Cecidit cito secta bipenni

Hercynia in lintres, et Rhenum texuit alno.'

(Panegyric of Avitus, 325-6.)

the army of Attila. All the Franks were still heathen, the fiercest of the Teutonic settlers in Gaul, and they bore an ill repute for unfaithfulness to their plighted word and even to their oaths. Small sign as yet was there that to them would one day fall the hegemony of the Gallic nations.

BOOK II
CH. 3.
451.

In the opposite corner of the country, between the Loire, the Garonne, and the Bay of Biscay, the Visigoths had erected a monarchy, the most civilized and compact of all the barbarian kingdoms, and the one which seemed to have the fairest promise of a long and triumphant life. By the peace which their king Walia concluded with Honorius (416) after the restoration of Placidia, they had obtained legal possession of the district called Aquitania Secunda, together with the territory round Toulouse, all of which allotment went by the name of Septimania¹ or Gothia. For ten years (419-429) there had been firm peace between Visigoths and Romans; then, for ten years more (429-439), fierce and almost continued war, Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, endeavouring to take Arles and Narbonne; Aetius and his subordinate Litorius striving to take the Gothic capital of Toulouse, and all but succeeding. And in these wars Aetius had availed himself of his long-standing friendship with the Huns to enlist them as auxiliaries against the warriors of Theo-

¹ From the seven chief cities comprised therein, which were—taking them from south to north—Toulouse (the Visigothic capital), Agen, Bordeaux, Périgueux, Angoulême, Saintes, and Poitiers.

BOOK II. doric, dangerous allies who plundered friends and
 CH. 8. enemies, and carried back doubtless to their dreary
 451. encampment in Hungary vivid remembrance of the
 sunny vineyards of Languedoc and Guienne. For
 the last twelve years (439-451) there had been
 peace, but scarcely friendship, between the Courts
 of Ravenna and Toulouse.

Armorican
 confederacy.

North of the Visigoths, the Celtic population of
 Brittany, known by the name of the Armoricans,
 had risen in arms against their Roman rulers, and
 had with some degree of success maintained their
 independence. From this time, perhaps, we ought
 to date that isolation of Brittany from the politics
 of the rest of France, which has not entirely dis-
 appeared even at the present day. But the terrible
 invader from the East welded even the stubborn
 Breton into temporary cohesion with his neigh-
 bours, and in the pages of Jornandes we find the
 'Armoritiani' fighting side by side with the Roman
 legions against Attila.

Saxons.

The same list includes a yet more familiar name,
 'Saxones.' How came our fathers thither; they,
 whose homes were in the long sandy levels of
 Holstein? As has been already pointed out, the
 national migration of the Angles and Saxons to
 our own island had already commenced, perhaps
 in part determined by the impulse northward of
 Attila's own subjects. Possibly like the Northmen,
 their successors, the Saxons may have invaded
 both sides of the English Channel at once, and may
 on this occasion have been standing in arms to

defend against their old foe some newly-won pos-
sessions in Normandy or Picardy.

BOOK II.
CH. 3.

In the south-east of Gaul, the Burgundians had
after many wars and some reverses established
themselves (443) with the consent of the Romans in
the district then called Sapaudia and now Savoy.
Their territory was somewhat more extensive than
the province which was the cradle of the present
royal house of Italy, since it stretched northwards
beyond the lake of Neufchatel, and southwards as
far as Grenoble. Here the Burgundian immigrants,
under their king, Gundiok, were busy settling them-
selves in their new possession, cultivating the lands
which they had divided by lot, each one receiving¹
half the estate of a Roman host or *hospes*, (for under
such gentle names the spoliation was veiled,) when
the news came that the terrible Hun had crossed
the Rhine, and that all hosts and guests in Gaul
must unite for its defence.

451.
Burgun-
dians.

The Alans, who had wandered thus far west-
wards from the country between the Volga and the
Don, had received (440) the district round Valence
for a possession from the Romans on much the
same terms probably as those by which the Bur-
gundians held Savoy. Of all the barbarian tribes
now quartered in Gaul they were the nearest
allied to the Huns, and Sangiban, their king, was

Alans.

¹ A later division was effected, which gave the Burgundian two-thirds of the arable land; but the primary apportionment seems to have been in equal shares (see Binding's *Burgundisch-Romanische Königreich*, i. p. 28).

BOOK II. strongly suspected of having some secret and
 CH. 3. treacherous understanding with Attila¹.

451.
 Remnants
 of Roman
 dominion
 in Gaul.

This chaos of barbarian tribes occupied perhaps one half of Gaul. Wherever Chaos was not, wherever some remains of the old imperial Cosmos were still left unsubmerged, there was Romania. We may conjecture that by this time very little of Roman domination remained in the Belgic Gaul. The eastern portions of Gallia Lugdunensis and Gallia Aquitanica, especially the city of Lyons and the mountains of Auvergne, seem to have been fervently loyal to the Emperor. Gallia Narbonensis with its capitals of Arles and Narbonne, but excepting Toulouse and its surrounding country, had successfully beaten back the Visigothic invader, and was almost more Roman than Rome itself.

Would the
 Romans
 and Bar-
 barians in
 Gaul
 coalesce
 against the
 Huns?

But the question of transcendent importance for Gaul, and indirectly for the whole future of Western Europe, was—'Would Chaos and Cosmos

¹ Jornandes (cap. 36) thus enumerates the nations who fought against Attila: 'Hic enim adfuere auxiliares Franci, Sarmatae Armoritiani, Litiani, Burgundiones, Saxones, Riparioli, Ibriones aliaeque nonnullae Celticae vel (= et) Germanicae nationes.' The Sarmatae may perhaps stand for the Alani (or the Taifalae whom Thierry speaks of as settled at Poitiers). The Litiani are identified both by Böcking (Notitia, p. 1057) and by Thierry (Hist. d'Attila, i. 169) with the Laeti, military colonists from among various Teutonic nations, many of whom had been settled in Gaul since the time of Diocletian. The Riparioli are probably the Riparian Franks. The Ibriones are declared by Thierry to be 'un petit peuple des Alpes, les Brenes ou Brennes, qu'Aetius avait ralliés pendant son voyage et amenés en Gaule;' but he does not quote his authority for this identification.

blend for a little space to resist the vaster and wilder Chaos which was roaring for them both, fierce from its Pannonian home? Especially could Aetius and Theodoric, so lately at death-grips for the possession of one another's capitals—Aetius who had all but lost Arles, Theodoric who had all but lost Toulouse, unite heartily enough and promptly enough to beat back Attila ?

BOOK II.
CH. 3.

451.

This was the doubt, and Attila thought he saw in it an opportunity to divide his foes. 'A subtle man, and one who fought by artifice before he waged his wars¹,' he sent ambassadors to Valentinian, representing his intended invasion as only a continuation of the old joint campaigns of Roman and Hun against the Visigoth. To Theodoric he sent other messengers, exhorting him to break off his unnatural alliance with Rome, and to remember the cruel wars which so lately had been kindled against his people by the lieutenants of the Augustus.

Attila's
embassies
to the
Roman and
Visigothic
courts.

Happily there was a little too much statesmanship both at Ravenna and Toulouse to allow of the success of so transparent an artifice. Valentinian's ambassadors to Theodoric addressed the Visigothic nation (if we may believe their panegyrist Jornandes) in some such words as these :

Valentinian's
embassy
to
Theodoric.

'It will comport with your usual wisdom, oh, bravest of the nations, to confederate with us against the tyrant of the universe, who longs to

¹ 'Homo subtilis antequam bella gereret, arte pugnabat' (Jornandes, cap. 36).

BOOK II. fasten the chains of slavery on the whole world,
 CH. 3.
 451. who does not seek for any reasonable excuses for battle, but thinks that whatsoever crimes he may commit are lawful because he is the doer of them. He measures the frontiers of his dominions by what? By the space that his arms can ravage. He gluts his pride by license, he spurns the ordinances of earth and of heaven, and shows himself the enemy of our common nature¹. Surely he deserves your hatred who proves himself the spiteful foe of all. Recollect, I pray you, what assuredly he does not forget, blood has once flowed between you, and with whatever wiles he may now cover his thirst for vengeance, it is there, and it is terrible. To say nothing of our grievances, can you any longer tolerate with patience the pride of this savage? Mighty as you are in arms, think of your own griefs' [and here, doubtless, words were used which would recall to the mind of Theodoric the cruel outrages inflicted on his daughter by Attila's ally], 'and join your hands with ours. Help the Republic which has given you one of her fairest provinces for a possession. If you would know how necessary the alliance of each of us is to the other, penetrate the council-chamber of the foe, and see how he labours to divide us.'

Theodoric was probably already meditating the Roman alliance, but these words are said to have decided him, and he replied, 'Romans, you have

¹ 'Hostem se exhibet naturæ cunctorum.'

your will. Attila is your foe ; you have made him
ours also. Wheresoever the sound of his ravages
shall call us, thither will we follow him ; and all
inflated as he is with his victories over so many
proud nations, yet the Goths too know how to do
battle with the proud. Strong in the goodness of
my cause, I deem no war laborious. No evil omen
daunts me when the majesty of the Emperor of
Rome smiles upon me.'

BOOK II.

CH. 3.

451.

There is something hollow and unreal, doubtless,
in these orations. In point of fact the Goths
showed no alacrity in the defence of Roman Gaul
till the storm of war rolled up to their own borders,
and even then, according to one account¹, required
a special messenger to rouse them from their un-
readiness. But the foundation for an alliance be-
tween Roman and Visigoth was laid, and it saved
Gaul.

Attila, foiled in his diplomacy, swept with his
vast host across the Rhine, and began the congenial
work of destruction. City after city of the Belgic
Gaul (which comprised all France north-east of the
Seine) fell before him. What help he may have
received from the Bagaudae, or rendered to the
young Frankish chieftain, his ally, we know not.
We only hear that one city after another was broken
up (*effracta*) by his savage hordes ; but no simple
human voice comes out of the Chaos to tell us what
common men and women suffered in that breaking
up of the great deep. The ecclesiastics, intent on

Attila's
invasion of
Belgic
Gaul.

¹ Sidonius, Panegyric of Avitus, 329-351.

BOOK II. the glorification of their own favourite saint or
 CH. 3. chapel, tell us a little of what was done, or was not
 451. done in the way of miraculous interposition on behalf of particular places, and even for their childish legends, of uncertain date, and bearing elements of fiction on the face of them, we have to be grateful, so complete is the silence of authentic history as to the earlier events of the invasion.

Vision of
 the Bishop
 of Tongres.

The bishop of Tongres in Belgium, Servatius by name, implored God, amidst fastings and watchings and constant showers of tears, that he would never permit 'the unbelieving and ever-unworthy nation of the Huns' to enter Gaul¹. Feeling sure in his spirit that this prayer was not granted, he sought the tomb of the Apostle Peter at Rome, and there, after three days' fasting, pressed his suit. The Apostle appeared to him in a vision and told him that according to the councils of the Most High, the Huns must certainly enter Gaul and ravage it for a time. But so much was conceded to Servatius, that he should not see the misery which was coming on his flock. He was therefore to return at once to his home, choose out his grave-clothes, and set his house in order, and then should he 'migrate from this body.' He returned accordingly, set all things in order for his burial, and told his flock that they should see his face no more. 'But they following him with great wailing and many tears, humbly prayed him—"Leave us not, oh holy father; forget us not, oh good shepherd!" Then, as they could

¹ Gregory of Tours, ii. 5.

not prevail upon him to stay, they received his blessing, kissed him, and departed. He went to the city of Utrecht, where he was seized with a mild fever, and his soul departed from his body. His corpse was brought back to Tongres, and buried by the city wall.' Such was the end of Servatius. Of the fate of his flock we have no further particulars.

'On the very eve of the blessed Easter, the Huns, coming forth out of Pannonia and laying waste everything on their march, arrived at Metz. They gave up the city to the flames, and slew the people with the edge of the sword, killing the priests themselves before the sacrosanct altar of the Lord. And in all that city no place remained unburnt except the oratory of the blessed Stephen, protomartyr and Levite.' Gregory of Tours¹ then proceeds to describe at unnecessary length a vision in which some one saw the blessed Levite, Stephen, interceding for this oratory with the Apostles Peter and Paul, and obtaining a promise that it should remain unharmed, 'that the nations might see that he availed somewhat with the Lord.'

From Lorraine into Champagne rolled on the devastating flood. St. Nicasius, bishop of Rheims, was hewn down before the altar of his church, while his lips were uttering the words of the Psalm, 'My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken thou me according to thy word.' Thus he attained the crown of martyrdom, though it has been truly remarked²

¹ ii. 5, 6.

² By Thierry and Herbert.

BOOK II. that the bishops and priests who fell beneath
 CH. 8. the swords of the Huns perished, not strictly
 45¹. as confessors of a religion, but as chief citizens of their dioceses, and as guardians of sacred treasure. Attila was a plunderer, but not a persecutor. He made war on civilization and on human nature, not on religion, for he did not understand it enough to hate it.

Lutetia
 Parisiorum.

The inhabitants of a little town¹ upon a clayey island in the Seine, near its junction with the Marne, were in such dread of its invasion by the Huns that they had made up their minds to flee, when a young girl of the neighbouring village of Nanterre, named Genovefa, succeeded in communicating to the wives of the inhabitants her own calm and heaven-born confidence that the place would not be assailed. The men disbelieved her mission, called her a false prophetess, would gladly have stoned her, or drowned her in the river. But the influence of the women, aided by the remembrance of the undoubted holiness of a neighbouring saint, Germanus of Auxerre, who had in former days taken the part of Genovefa, saved her from insult, and her counsels from rejection. The inhabitants remained, the prayers of the women, or the insignificance of the place, saved it from the presence of the enemy. Could the squalid Pannonian hordes have overleapt fourteen centuries of time as well as the few miles of space which intervened, how their eyes would have sparkled, and their

¹ πολίχνη, Zosimus, Julian.

hearts well-nigh stopped beating with the ecstasy of rapine, for the town which was then scarcely worth attacking is now known by the name of Paris. Justly, if the story be true, are Sainte Geneviève and Saint Germain among the names still held in highest honour by the beautiful city on the Seine.

BOOK 11.
CH. 3.
451.

In the after-growth of mediaeval ecclesiastical chronicles it may well be supposed that Attila's destroying hand is made responsible for even more ruin than it actually caused. Thus, 'Maistre Jacques de Guise,' writing his history of Hainault in the fifteenth century, informs his readers that 'they must know that no town, fortress, or city, however strong it might be, could resist this people, so cruel was it and malevolent. . . . Moreover, by this tyrant Attila were destroyed nearly all the cities of Gaul and Germany¹. Firstly, Reims, Cambrai, Treveres (Trèves), Mectz (Metz), Arras, Tongres, Tournay, Therouenne, Coulongne (Cologne), Amiens, Beauvais, Paris, and so many towns, cities, and fortresses that whoso should wish to put them all in writing he would too much weary the readers². . . .

Mediaeval
tales of
Attila's
destruc-
tions.

'Item, by him were destroyed in Germany, Maience, a very noble city, Warmose (Worms), Argen-

¹ 'Et est a scavoir que nulle ville / forteresse : ou cite tant forte q'ille fust ne resistoit a ce peuple / tant estoit cruel et maliuolent.

'Dessouz celluy tirant Attila furēt destruiectes presque toutes les citez de Gaulle et de Germanie,' ii. 18.

'Et tant de villes citez et forteresses / que qui les voudroit toutes mectre en escript / il pourroit trop ennuyer les lisants.' Ib. 19.

BOOK II. tore (Strasburg), Nymaie (?), Langres and Ner-
 CH. 3. bonne(?). In this year, as saith Sigebert, were
 451. martirised the eleven thousand virgins in the city
 of Coulongne¹.

This extract does not, of course, possess any shadow of historical authority. It is certainly wrong as to Narbonne and Nismes (if that be the city intended by Nymaie), and it is probably wrong as to Paris. But, with these exceptions, the cities named are all either in or upon the confines of Gallia Belgica, the chief scene of Attila's ravages, and the list is not an improbable one, though we can well believe that, as every defaced tomb and mutilated statue in an English church claims to have been maltreated by 'Cromwell's soldiers,' so no monkish chronicler who had a reasonable opportunity of bringing 'Attila' and his malevolent Huns near to the shrine of his favourite saint would be likely to forego the terrible fascination.

Attila
 marches to
 the Loire.

When Belgic Gaul was ravaged to his heart's content, the Hun turned his footsteps towards Aquitaine, which contained the settlements of the Visigoths, and where, as he well knew, his hardest task awaited him. The Loire, flowing first northwards, then westwards, protects, by its broad sickle of waters, this portion of Gaul, and the Loire itself is commanded at its most northerly point by that city which, known in Caesar's day as Genabum, had taken the name Aureliani from the great Emperor,

Defence of
 Orleans.

¹ 'En celluy au / comme dit Sigibert / furēt martirisez les xi mil vierges en la cité de Coulongne.'

the conqueror of Zenobia, and is now called Orleans. BOOK II.
CH. 3.
451.
Three times has Aureliani played an eminent part in the history of Gaul. There broke out the great insurrection of B. C. 52 against the victorious Caesar ; there Attila's host, in A. D. 451, received their first repulse ; and there in 1429, the maid of Domremy, by forcing the Duke of Bedford to raise the siege, wrested from the English Plantagenets their last chance of ruling in France.

The hero of Orleans, in this defence of her walls, St. Anianus. was the Bishop, Anianus. He had visited Aetius at Arles, and strongly impressed upon the mind of that general the necessity of relieving Orleans before the 24th of June at the very latest. Then returning to the city he cheered his flock with words of pious hope. The battering-rams of Attila thundered against the walls and the hearts of the people began to fail them. To Anianus himself the promised help seemed to linger. He knew not, and we cannot with certainty state the true cause of the delay which is related to us only by one doubtful authority¹. Aetius, it is said, emerged from the Alpine passes with only a slender and ill-officered train of soldiers, and then found that the Goths, instead of moving eastward to join

¹ Apollinaris Sidonius, Panegyric of Avitus, 328-356. As the whole object of this poem is to pour laudation on the head of Avitus, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the backwardness of the Visigoths has been exaggerated or even invented in order to enhance his glory. He may have simply borne to the camp of Theodoric a message from Aetius arranging the time and place of meeting for the two armies.

BOOK II. him, were thinking of awaiting the attack of the
 CH. 3. dreaded foe in their own territory behind the Loire.

451. In this unforeseen perplexity, Aetius availed himself of the services of Avitus, a Roman noble of Auvergne, and a *persona grata* at the court of Theodoric. His visit to the Gothic king proved successful.

‘He aroused their wrath, making it subservient to the purposes of Rome¹, and marched in the midst of the skin-clothed warriors to the sound of the trumpets of Romulus.’

Meanwhile the consternation within the city of Orleans went on increasing as the citizens saw their walls crumbling into ruin beneath the blows of the battering-rams of Attila. One day, when they were fervently praying in the church, ‘Anianus said, “Look forth from the ramparts and see if God’s mercy yet succours us.” They gazed forth from the wall, but beheld no man. He said, “Pray in faith : the Lord will liberate you to-day.” They went on praying ; again he bade them mount the walls, and again they saw no help approaching. He said to them the third time, “If ye pray in faith, the Lord will speedily be at hand to help you.” Then they with weeping and loud lamentation implored the mercy of the Lord. When their prayer was ended, a third time, at the command of that old man, they mounted the wall, and looking forth they saw from afar, as it were, a cloud rising out of the ground. When they brought him word of it he said, “It is the help of God.” In the mean-

¹ ‘Famulas in proelia concitat iras.’

while, as the walls were now trembling under the stroke of the rams, and were already on the point of falling into ruin, lo! Aetius and Theodoric, the king of the Goths, and Thorismund, his son, come running up to the city, turn the ranks of the enemy, cast him out, and drive him far away¹. It was apparently on the very day fixed between the bishop and the general (the 24th of June) that this relief came.

BOOK II.
CH. 3.
451.

Foiled in his attempt to take Orleans and to turn the line of the Loire, Attila, with his unwieldy host, began to retreat towards the Rhine. It is the weakness of those marauding warriors, of whom he may be considered the type, that their recoil must be as rapid as their onset. A ruined and devastated country cannot be compelled to furnish the subsistence for lack of which it is itself perishing. Everywhere along the line of march are thousands of bitter wrongs waiting for revenge. And the marauders themselves to whom pillage, not patriotism or discipline, has been the one inspiring motive, and the common bond of union,

Retreat
towards
the Rhine.

¹ This is the account of the siege of Orleans given by Gregory of Tours about a century and a half after the event. (ii. 7.) The story given in the life of St. Anianus in the *Acta Sanctorum* differs in some particulars from this. Nothing is said of the three visits to the walls or the far-off cloud of dust; but the prayers of the saint bring a four-days' storm of rain, which greatly hinders the works of the besiegers. They have, however, made a practicable breach and are actually within the city, when the relieving army appears. Gregory's word 'ejiciunt' (cast them out of the city) gives some probability to this part of the narrative.

BOOK II. when the hope of further pillage fails, are each
 CH. 8. secretly revolving the same thought, how to leave
 451. the ravaged country as soon as possible with their
 plunder undiminished.

Attila
 reaches
 Troyes.

Bishop
 Lupus.

Doubtless Aetius and Theodoric were hovering on Attila's rear, neglecting no opportunity of casual vengeance on the stragglers from the host, and endeavouring to force him to battle at every point where, from the nature of the country, he would be compelled to fight at a disadvantage. But we hear no details of his retreat till he reached the city of Troyes, 114 Roman miles from Orleans¹. The Bishop of Troyes was the venerable Lupus, a man who was by this time nearly 70 years of age, and who, in common with St. Germanus, had greatly distinguished himself by his opposition to the Pelagian heresy which he had combated in Britain as well as in Gaul. Troyes was an open city, undefended by walls or arsenals, and the immense swarm of the Huns and their allies who came clamouring round it were hungering for spoil and chafed with disappointment at their failure before Orleans².

¹ The distances and the stations on the Roman road between Metz and Orleans are quoted by Thierry (*Hist. d'Attila*, i. 162). He makes five halting-places between Orleans and Troyes (Aureliani and Tricasses).

² It is only by conjecture that the following incident is assigned to the time of Attila's retreat. The words of the *Acta Sanctorum* would be consistent with the interpretation that the Huns were still moving on into Gaul. But the expression '*Rheni etiam fluenta visurum*,' looks as if Attila's face was now set Rhine-wards. The first Life given by the Bollandists is evidently of far greater value than the second: in fact, this latter is worth-

Lupus, as we are told in the *Acta Sanctorum*, be- BOOK 11.
took himself to his only weapon, prayer, and CH. 8.
thereby successfully defended his city from the 451.
assaults of the enemy. The ecclesiastical biographer seems to be purposely enigmatic and obscure, but there are touches in the story which look like truth. It appears that Attila, who may have been partly swayed by the remembrance that the allies were close upon his track, and that a night of pillage would have been a bad preparation of his troops for the coming battle, was also impressed—'fierce wild beast as he was'¹—by something which seemed not altogether of this earth in the face and demeanour of Lupus, something unlike the servile and sordid diplomatists of Byzantium who had hitherto been his chief exemplars of Christianity. In granting the bishop's prayer for the immunity of his city from pillage, he made one stipulation, that, 'for the safety of himself and his own army the holy man should go with them and see the streams of the Rhine, after which he promised that he would dismiss him in peace. And so it was ; as soon as they arrived at the river he offered him a free passage back, did not hinder his return, sent guides to show him the way ; and even earnestly besought, by the mouth of the interpreter Hunagaisus, that the bishop would pray for him.'

less. It is curious to observe that it contains the cant phrase 'flagellum Dei,' which is absent from the other record.

¹ 'At ille feralis Attila et immitis' (Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum*, July 29).

BOOK II. This Hunagaisus is undoubtedly the same minister
 CH. 3. with whom we have made acquaintance in the
 451. Hunnish camp under the name of Onegesius or Onégesh, and the introduction of his name here in a biography probably composed about the middle of the sixth century, is some guarantee that we are on the track of a genuine tradition. If so, the thought that a Gaulish theologian was present in the camp of Attila during the scenes which are next to follow, gives a fresh interest to the picture, some of the details of which he may himself have described.

Battle of
 the Mau-
 riatic Plain
 commonly
 called the
 Battle of
 Chalons.

For in the interval between Attila's arrival before Troyes, and his dismissal of Lupus on the banks of the Rhine, occurred that great clash of armed nations which decided the question whether the West of Europe was to belong to Turanian or to Aryan nationalities. Posterity has chosen to call it the battle of Chalons, but there is good reason to think that it was fought fifty miles distant from Chalons-sur-Marne, and that it would be more correctly named the battle of Troyes, or, to speak with complete accuracy, the battle of *Mery-sur-Seine* ¹.

By what preceding arts of strategy the campaign was marked, whether Attila willingly offered battle or was so sorely harassed in his retreat that he was unable to decline it, we know not, except that we read of a skirmish between the Franks and Gepidae on the night preceding the general engagement ².

¹ In contemporary language 'the battle of the Mauriac Plain.'

² See Jornandes, cap. 41, quoted below.

It was probably in the early days of July¹ that the two great armies at length came together. What followed shall be told in the (freely rendered) words of Jornandes himself, who throws all his heart into the narration, feeling, and rightly, that this death-grapple with the enemies of Rome was in some sense the mightiest deed that his kinsmen had achieved, and sympathising, notwithstanding his own Ostrogothic descent, with Theodoric the Visigothic antagonist of Attila, rather than with Walamir his feudatory.

BOOK 11.
CH. 3.
451.

After enumerating in the passage already quoted² the various nationalities which fought under the banner of Aetius, he continues, 'All come together therefore into the Catalaunian, which are also called the Maurician plains, 100 Gallic *leugae* in length and 70 in breadth. Now the *leuga* is equivalent to one Roman mile and a half. So then that district of the world becomes the parade ground of innumerable nationalities. Both the armies which there meet are of the mightiest; nothing is done by underhand machinations, but everything by fair and open fight. What worthy reason could be assigned for the deaths of so many thousands? What hatred had crept into so many

¹ I venture here to dissent from a conclusion arrived at in the *Fasti Romani* (i. 642). Clinton, on the authority of Isidore of Seville, fixes the date of the battle after Sept. 27th. This seems contrary to the whole tenour of the history and to the order of events described in Idatius, from whom Isidore has copied.

² See note on p. 124.

BOOK II. breasts and bidden them take up arms against one
 CH. 3. another? It is surely proved that the race of man
 451. live but for the sake of Kings; since the mad onset
 of one man's mind could cause the slaughter of so
 many nations, and in a moment, by the caprice of
 one arrogant king, the fruit of nature's toil through
 so many centuries could be destroyed.

‘Chapter 37.

Prelimi-
 nary move-
 ments.

‘But before relating the actual order of the fight, it seems necessary to explain some of the preliminary movements of the war, because famous as the battle was, it was no less manifold and complicated. For Sangiban, king of the Alans, foreboding future disaster, had promised to surrender himself to Attila, and to bring into obedience to him the city of Orleans where he was then quartered. When Theodoric and Aetius had knowledge of this, they built great mounds against the city and destroyed it before the coming of Attila¹. Upon Sangiban himself they set a close watch, and stationed him with his own proper tribe in the very midst of their auxiliaries. Attila meanwhile, struck by this occurrence, distrusting his own powers, fearing to engage in the conflict, and secretly considering the expediency of flight, which was more grievous to him than death itself, resolved to enquire as to the future from the augurs. These men, according to their wont, first pored over the bowels of some

Auguries.

¹ If the text is not corrupt here, Jornandes must have received some very distorted account of the events of the siege of Orleans.

sheep, then pondered the direction of the veins in some scraped bones, and then gave forth their augury, "Ill fortune to the Huns." They qualified it however with this crumb of comfort, "that the chief leader on the opposite side should fall in the midst of victory, and so mar the triumph of his followers." To Attila the death of Aetius [whom he supposed to be intended by the words "the chief leader of the enemy"] seemed to be worth purchasing even by the defeat of his army, yet being naturally rendered anxious by such an answer, and being a man of much address in war-like matters, he determined, with some fear and trembling, to join battle about the ninth¹ hour of the day [3 p.m.], so that if his affairs turned out ill, impending night might come to his aid. . . .

‘Chapter 38.

‘Now this was the configuration of the field of battle². It rose [on one side] into a decided undulation which might be called a hill; and as both parties wished to get the not inconsiderable advantage of the ground which this eminence conferred, the Huns took possession of the right-hand portion of it with their troops; the Romans and Visigoths of the left with their auxiliaries³.’

¹ This note of time suits July better than October. Even for July, the interval between three o'clock and sunset seems full short for such a battle ‘multiplex et immane.’

² ‘Erat autem positio loci declivi tumore, in modum collis exarscens.’

³ Perhaps Jornandes means that the right wing of the Hunnish

BOOK II. Leaving for a while the fight for the possession
CR. 3. of this ridge [let us describe the order of the main

451. battle]. On the right wing stood Theodoric with
Roman line of battle. the Visigoths, on the left Aetius with the Romans.
 In the middle they placed Sangiban, the leader of
 the Alans,—a piece of military caution to enclose
 him, of whose disposition they were none too confi-
 dent, in a mass of loyal soldiers. For the man in
 the way of whose flight you have interposed a
 sufficient obstacle, easily accepts the necessity of
 fighting.

Hunnish
line of
battle.

‘The line of the Huns was drawn up on a
 different principle, for in their centre stood Attila
 with all his bravest warriors. In this arrangement
 the king consulted his own personal safety, hoping
 that by taking his place in the very heart and
 strength of his own people he at least should be
 delivered from the impending danger. Upon the
 wings of his army hovered the many nations and
 tribes whom he had subjected to his dominion.
 Preeminent among these was the host of the
 Ostrogoths, led by the three brothers, Walamir,
 Theodemir, and Widemir, men of nobler birth than
 the king himself whom they then obeyed, since the
 mighty line of the Amals was represented by
 them. There too, at the head of the countless
 warriors of the Gepidae, was their king Ardaric,
 that man of valour and of fame who for his

army and the left wing of the confederates both endeavoured
 to occupy this ground. ‘*Dextram partem Hunni cum suis,
 sinistram Romani et Vesegothae cum auxiliariis occuparunt.*’

extraordinary fidelity towards Attila was admitted BOOK II
into his inmost counsels. For Attila, who had CH. 3.
well weighed his sagacious character, loved him 451,
and Walamir, the Ostrogoth, above all his other
subject princes; Walamir, the safe keeper of a
secret, the pleasant in speech, the ignorant of guile,
and Ardaric, who, as we have said, was illustrious
both by his loyalty and his wise advice. To these
two nations Attila believed, not undeservedly, that
he might safely entrust the battle against their
Visigothic kindred. As for all the rest, the ruck of
kings—if I may call them so—and the leaders of
diverse nationalities, these, like subaltern officers,
watched each nod of Attila; and, when a look of
his eye summoned them, in fear and trembling
they would gather round him waiting in submissive
silence to receive his commands, or at any rate'
(i.e. if their subservience was less abject) 'they
would carry out whatever he ordered'. But Attila
alone, King of all the kings, was over all in com-
mand, and had the care of all upon his shoulders.

'As I before said, the fight began with a struggle
for the possession of some rising ground. Attila
directed his troops to occupy the summit of the
hill, but he was anticipated by Thorismund and
Aetius, who [from the other side] struggled up to

¹ 'Reliqua autem, si dici fas est, turba regum, diversarumque
nationum ductores, ac si satellites, nutibus Attilae attendebant,
et ubi oculo annuisset, absque aliquâ murmuratione cum timore
et tremore unusquisque adstabat, aut certe quod jussus fuerat
exsequebatur.'

BOOK II. the highest point, and then, having the advantage
 CH. 3. of the hill in their favour, easily threw into confusion the advancing Huns.
 451.

‘Chapter 39.

Attila's
 speech to
 his troops.

‘Then Attila, seeing his army somewhat disturbed by this skirmish, thought the time a suitable one for confirming their courage by an address.

‘SPEECH OF ATTILA.

‘After your victories over so many nations, after a whole world subdued, if ye only stand fast this day, I should have deemed it a fond thing to whet your spirits with words, as though ye were yet ignorant of your business. Let a new general or an inexperienced army try that method. It were beneath my dignity to utter, and beyond your obligation to listen to, any of the commonplaces of war. For what other occupation are you practised in, if not in fighting? And to the strong man what is sweeter, than with his own right hand to seek for his revenge? It is one of the greatest boons which nature gives us to glut our souls with vengeance. Let us therefore go forward with cheerfulness to attack the enemy, since they who strike the blow have ever the boldest hearts. You who are united under my sway—I tell you to despise these jarring nationalities, leagued together for the momentary purpose of self-defence by an alliance which is in itself an index of their terror. Lo! ere they have yet felt our onset, they are

carried to and fro by their fear; they look out for the rising ground, they are exciting themselves over the occupation of every little hillock, and rueing too late their own rashness; they are clamouring for ramparts in these open plains¹. Known to you right well are the flimsy arms and weak frames of the Roman soldiers; I will not say at the first wound, at the first speck of dust on their armour they lose heart. While they are solemnly forming their battle array and locking their shields together into the *testudo*, do you rush into the conflict with that surpassing courage which it is your wont to show, and, despising the Roman line, charge at the Alans, press heavily on the Visigoths. It is there that we must look for speedy victory, for they are the key of the position. Cut the sinews and the limbs will be at once relaxed; nor can the body stand if you have taken away its bones.

"O ye Huns, raise your hearts battle-high and let your wonted fury swell your veins. Now put forth all your cunning; now use all your arms. Let him who is wounded seek still for at least one enemy's death; let him who is unhurt revel in the slaughter of the foe. Him who is fated to conquer, no dart will touch; him who is doomed to die, fate will find in the midst of slothful peace.

¹ 'Et serâ poenitudine in campis munitiones efflagitant.' An incidental argument against the theory that the so-called 'Camp of Attila' (which would be precisely 'in campis munitio') was occupied by his troops.

BOOK 11. And, last of all, why should Fortune have set her
 CH. 3. mark upon the Huns as conquerors of so many
 451. nations, unless she was preparing them for the
 delights of this battle too? Who opened the
 way across the pool of Azof, for so many centuries
 an impenetrable secret from our ancestors? Who
 made armed men bow before them while they
 were still unarmed? Yonder motley host will
 never endure to look upon the faces of the Huns.
 The event cannot mock my hopes: this, this is
 the field of victory which so many previous suc-
 cesses have avouched us of. I shall be the first
 to hurl my weapon against the enemy, and if any
 one can linger inactive when Attila fights, he is a
 thing without a soul, and ought to be buried out-
 of hand¹."

'Their hearts were warmed at these words, and
 all rushed headlong into the fray.

'Chapter 40.

'The position of their affairs was not without
 its suggestions of fear, but the presence of their
 king removed all tendency to delay even from
 the most hesitating.

The Battle
 com-
 menced.

'Hand to hand the two armies were soon en-
 gaged. It was a battle,—ruthless, manifold,
 immense, obstinate,—such as antiquity in all its
 stories of similar encounters has nought parallel to,
 such as, if a man failed to see, no other marvel that

¹ 'Si quis potuerit Attila pugnante ocium ferre sepultus est.'

he might behold in the course of his life would compensate for the omission¹. For if we may believe the report of our elders, a brook which was gliding down between low banks, through the aforesaid plain, receiving the blood which gushed from thousands of wounds, was, not by showers of rain, but by that ghastly intermingling, swollen from a brook into a torrent. And those whom parching thirst, the consequence of their wounds, drove to its banks, found that murder was mixed with the draught. A miserable fate for them who drank of the gore which their own wounds poured forth.

BOOK II.
CH. 3.
451.

‘Here the King Theodoric, while he was galloping backwards and forwards, cheering on his army, was thrown from his horse, and being trampled under the feet of his own party, thus ended his life in a ripe old age. Others however assert that he was smitten by a javelin from the hand of Andages, of the nation of the Ostrogoths, who were then following the lead of Attila. This was the event which Attila’s soothsayers had foretold to him in their divinations, though he understood them to speak of Aetius.

Death of
Theodoric.

‘Then the Visigoths, splitting off from the Alans, rushed upon the squadrons of the Huns, and had well-nigh slaughtered Attila himself, but he prudently fled, and straightway enclosed himself and

Visigothic
onset be-
fore which
Attila
gives way.

¹ A free translation of ‘ut nihil esset quod in vita sua conspicere potuisset egregius qui hujus miraculi privaretur aspectu.’ *Egregius* is evidently the neuter comparative.

BOOK II. his followers within the defences of his camp, upon

CH. 3.

451.

which he had placed the waggons by way of rampart. It seemed a frail bulwark to be sure, still they clung to it as their last chance of life ; and yet these were the men whose desperate onset a little while ago stone walls could not stand against. Meanwhile Thorismund, the son of King Theodoric, the same who had taken part with Aetius in the occupation of the hill, and in driving down the enemy from that higher ground, lost his way in the blind night, and thinking that he was re-joining his own men on their line of march, came unawares upon the waggons of the enemy. Here, while he was fighting bravely, his horse was killed under him by a wound in the head. He fell to the ground, but was rescued by the care of his people, and persuaded to desist from the unequal encounter. Aetius in the same way was separated from his host in the confusion of the night, and went wandering through the midst of the enemy¹, trembling lest some untoward event should have occurred to the Goths, and ever asking the way, till at length he arrived at the camp of his allies, and passed the remainder of the night under the shelter of their shields.

Morning
after the
fight.

‘Next morning when day dawned, and the allied generals beheld the vast plains covered with corpses, but saw that the Huns did not venture to sally forth, they concluded that the victory was theirs.

¹ Having from his youth been accustomed to intercourse with the Huns, he probably spoke their language like a native.

They knew perfectly well that it could have been no common slaughter which had compelled Attila to fly in confusion from the battle-field ; and yet he did not act like one in abject prostration, but clashed his arms, sounded his trumpets, and continually threatened a fresh attack. As a lion, close pressed by the hunters, ramps up and down before the entrance to his cave, and neither dares to make a spring, nor yet ceases to frighten all the neighbourhood with his roarings, so did that most warlike king, though hemmed in, trouble his conquerors. The Goths and Romans accordingly called a council of war and deliberated what was to be done with their worsted foe. As he had no store of provisions, and as he had so posted his archers within the boundaries of his camp as to rain a shower of missiles on an advancing assailant, they decided not to attempt a storm, but to weary him out by a blockade. It is said however that seeing the desperate condition of his affairs, the aforesaid King, high-minded still in the supreme crisis of his fate, had constructed a funeral pyre of horses' saddles, determined, if the enemy should break into his camp, to hurl himself headlong into the flames, that none should boast himself and say, "I have wounded Attila," nor that the lord of so many nations should fall alive into the hands of his enemies.

BOOK II.
CH. 3.
451.

‘Chapter 41.

‘During the delays of this blockade the Visi-

BOOK II.
CH. 3.

451.
Burial of
Theodoric.

goths were looking for their old king, and marvelling at his absence from the scene of victory. After a long search they found him, as is wont to be the case with brave men, lying there where the bodies were thickest; and singing their songs in his honour, they bore away his corpse from the gaze of the enemy. Then should you have seen the Gothic companies lifting up their untuned voices in a wild strain of lamentation, and, while the battle still raged around them, giving all heed to the exact observance of the rites of burial. Tears were shed, but they were the tears which are rightly paid to brave men dead. The death had been on our [the Gothic] side, but the Hun himself bore witness that it had been a glorious one, and even Attila's pride might bow when he saw the corpse of such a king borne out to burial with all his kingly ornaments about him¹.

Elevation
of Thoris-
mund.

'The Goths, while still paying the last honours to Theodoric, by the clash of their weapons hailed the majesty of a new king, and the brave and glorious Thorismund, decked with that title, followed the funeral of his dearly-loved father as became a son. Then, when that was finished, grief for the loss which he had sustained, and the impulse of his own fiery valour, urged him to avenge the death of his father upon the Hunnish host.

¹ A conjectural expansion of '*Nostra mors erat, sed Hunno teste gloriosa unde hostium putaretur inclinata fore superbia, quando tanti Regis efferre cadaver cum suis insignibus inspiciebant.*'

First, however, he consulted Aetius the patrician, as the senior general and a man of ripened experience, what step he would advise to be next taken. He, fearing lest if the Huns were destroyed root and branch, the Roman Empire might be still more hardly pressed by the Goths, earnestly tendered this advice, "that he should return to his own capital and grasp the kingdom which his father had left; lest otherwise his brothers should seize on his father's treasures, and so make the realm of the Visigoths their own, whereupon he would have to commence a laborious campaign, and one in which victory would be a wretched business, since it would be over his own flesh and blood."

'Thorismund received this advice as the best thing for his own interest, without perceiving the duplicity which lurked beneath it, and leaving the Huns, he returned to his own district in Gaul. So does human frailty, if it becomes entangled in suspicion, often lose irretrievably the opportunity of achieving great results¹.

BOOK II.
CH. 3.
451.
Return of
Thoris-
mund to
Toulouse.

'In this most famous battle, which was fought between the bravest nations in the world, it is reported that 162,000² men were slain on both sides, not including 15,000³ of Gepidae and Franks, who, falling foul of one another the night before

Numbers
of the
slain.

¹ 'And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.'

² Idatius puts the number of slain at 300,000.

³ A correction which seems almost necessary, and which has some MS. authority, for the 90,000 of the ordinary text (xv for xc).

BOOK II. the battle, perished by mutually inflicted wounds,
 Ч. 3. the Franks fighting on the side of the Romans, the
 451. Gepidae on that of the Huns.

Unex-
 pected de-
 liverance
 of Attila.

‘When Attila learned the departure of the Goths, the event was so unexpected¹ that he surmised it to be a stratagem of the enemy, and kept his troops within the camp for some time longer. But when he found that the absence of the enemy was followed by a long time of silence, his mind again rose with the hope of victory, future joys unfolded themselves before him, and the courage of this mighty king returned again to its old level. Meanwhile Thorismund, who had been clothed with the regal majesty on the Catalaunian plains on the very place where his father had fallen, entered Toulouse, and here, notwithstanding that his brothers had a strong party among the chiefs, he so prudently managed the commencement of his reign, that no dispute was raised as to the succession.’

Why was
 the victory
 not fol-
 lowed up?

So far Jornandes. The battle then was lost but not won: lost as far as Attila’s invasion of Gaul was concerned, but not won for the Roman Empire by the destruction of its most dreaded foe. In reading the story of Attila’s escape from Aetius, one is naturally reminded of Alaric’s escape from Stilicho, forty-eight years before, and of the imputations then thrown out² as to the connivance of the Ro-

¹ Doubtful translation.

² By Orosius, vii. 37, ‘Taceo de Alarico cum Gothis suis saepe victo, saepe concluso, semperque dimisso.’

man general. And the same remark which was made then may be to some extent applicable now.

BOOK II.
CH. 3.

With troops of such uncertain temper, and, in this case, with such imperfect cohesion as the greater part of the Roman auxiliaries showed, it might be dangerous to animate the vast host of Attila with the irresistible courage of despair. In all ages, from Sphacteria to Saratoga, and from Saratoga to Sedan, the final operation of compelling the surrender of a beaten army, the landing, so to speak, of the fisherman's prize, has been an operation requiring some nicety of generalship and a pretty high degree of confidence in the discipline of the victorious troops. Even the clash of arms and the blast of trumpets in the camp of the Huns—the lashing of the lion's tail, and the deep thunder of his roar—may have struck some terror into the hearts of his hunters. But after all, Jornandes is probably not very wide of the mark when he imputes both to Aetius and to Thorismund a want of whole-heartedness in securing the fruits of victory.

451.

Aetius had not, most probably, such accurately wrought-out views of the balance of power as the historian imputes to him, nor such an over-mastering dread of Gothic bravery as their countryman supposed. But, in the very outset of his career, his life had been passed alternately in the Hunnish camp and the Roman palace; he had been 'mingled among the heathen and learned their works.' He had used the help of his barbarian friends in the marshes of Ravenna and under the walls of

Reasons
which in-
fluenced
Aetius.

BOOK II. Toulouse. Reasons of sentiment as well as of policy
 CH. 3.

451. may have made him reluctant to aid in obliterating the very name of the Huns from the earth. And above all, as the events of the next few years showed, he himself was safe only so long as he was indispensable. There was a dark and rotten-hearted Augustus skulking in the palace at Ravenna, who endured the ascendancy of Aetius only because he trembled at the name of Attila.

Reasons
 which
 influenced
 Thoris-
 mund.

On the Gothic side there were also good reasons for not pushing the victory too far. It scarcely needed the whisper of the Roman general to remind Thorismund how uncertain was his succession to the royalty of his father. The kingly office among the Visigoths became in days subsequent to these, a purely elective dignity. If at this time some notion of hereditary right, or at least of hereditary preference, hovered round the family of the dead king, it was by no means clear that one son alone must succeed, nor that son the eldest. All was still vague and indeterminate in reference to these barbaric sovereignties. In point of fact Thorismund, though he now succeeded to the throne, 453. was, only two years later, deprived of crown and life by his brother Theodoric II, who, after a peaceful and prosperous reign, succumbed in like fashion to the fratricidal hand of his successor Euric. 466. Every motive therefore of individual ambition and far-seeing patriotism concurred in recommending to Thorismund and his chiefs a speedy return to Toulouse, that the same army which brought the

tidings of the death of Theodoric might also announce the election of his successor.

BOOK II.
CH. 3.

This is all that history can say with unhesitating voice concerning the death of the Visigothic king and the accession of his son on the Mauriac plain. Archaeology, however, offers a contribution to our knowledge, which, if not raised beyond the reach of all contradiction, is at least curious and interesting. In 1842, a labourer digging for gravel near the little village of Pouan, on the south bank of the Aube, and about ten miles from Mery-sur-Seine, found at a depth of nearly a yard below the surface 'some human bones, two rusted blades, and several jewels and golden ornaments of considerable weight.' Examined more in detail, the most interesting objects in this find appeared to be

451.
Recent
discovery
of the
grave of
a Gothic
chief near
the site of
the battle.

I. A two-edged sword, 2 feet 8 inches long, and 3 inches broad. The point is protected by a little oblong hoop of iron, to prevent it from penetrating into the scabbard, which was probably of wood, and which of course has disappeared.

II. A cutlass, about 22 inches long, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch broad. Both of these two weapons have the hilts richly adorned with gold, and at the top a sort of lattice-work of gold and purple glass.

III. A golden necklace, serpent-shaped, weighing three ounces.

IV. A golden armlet, five ounces in weight, with the ends left open, so as to give it elasticity in fitting it on to the forearm.

V. Two golden clasps (*fibulae*) with the same

BOOK II. lattice-work of gold and purple glass which is
 CH. 3. found on the hilts of the swords.

451.

VI. A golden signet-ring, an ounce-and-a-half in weight, with the word HEVA in Roman capitals on the flat surface.

Some gold buckles and other ornaments, one of which has an inlay of garnets instead of purple glass, complete the treasure-trove, which, having been eventually purchased by the Emperor Napoleon III, was presented by him to the museum of the city of Troyes.

The question arises, 'Can we form any probable conjecture whose grave is this in which we find a skeleton surrounded with articles of adornment, worth even now perhaps £100 in intrinsic value, and pointing by the style of their workmanship towards the fifth or sixth century, and towards a Gothic or Frankish artificer?'

Is this the
 tomb of
 Theodoric?

M. Peigné Delacourt, to whom we are indebted for these details¹, answers unhesitatingly, 'We can.

It is probably the tomb of Theodoric I, king of the Visigoths.' But how reconcile such a theory with the narrative of Jornandes? To accomplish this, M. Delacourt imagines a few unrecorded details,

¹ See 'Recherches sur le lieu de la Bataille d'Attila en 451 par Peigné-Delacourt, Membre correspondant de la Société Impériale des Antiquaires de France,' &c., Paris, 1860, with Supplement published at Troyes, 1866. This monograph is sumptuously illustrated with chromo-lithographic pictures of the find itself and of other ornaments found in France and Spain, which, in the author's opinion, point to a similarity of date or origin.

which of course no one is bound to accept, but which certainly seem to bring us a little nearer to that tremendous battle-field, dim with the haze of fourteen centuries. 'When the servants of Theodoric,' so his imagined story runs, 'found that their king was wounded to death, they dragged him a little aside from the "vast and manifold and ruthless conflict." They dug a shallow trench in the gravelly soil, and there they laid the bruised and trampled body of the snowy-bearded warrior. His golden-hilted sword was still by his side, his cutlass hung from the baldric, the purple robe of his royalty was fastened over his shoulders by the golden fibula. Round his neck was the golden torque, his forearm was clasped by the unclosed bracelet, on his finger was the ring of gold bearing the mysterious name Heva, perhaps a remembrance of his dead wife, perhaps¹ a symbol of his kingship. All these things were buried with him. The only object of his henchmen was to find a temporary resting-place for their lord. When the tide of battle should have rolled away from that spot, they would come again and disinter him and carry him southwards, to be laid with proper pomp in Gothic Toulouse by the Garonne. Such was their thought, but Fortune, in making void their counsel, worked a strange reprisal for the barbarity practised in the

BOOK II.
CH. 3.
451.

¹ Heva *may* possibly mean 'wife' or 'house.' But it seems more probable that it is a proper name. The termination *a* is frequent in Gothic names. More so, however, we must admit in those of men than of women.

BOOK II. burial of Alaric. As *his* tomb was dug by the
CH. 3. unwilling hands of captives, whose instant death
451. insured their secrecy, so the few faithful friends of
Theodoric were all slain in the terrible tussle of
war which raged round the spot where he had
fallen, and thus his grave remained unmarked for
1391 years. The battle was won, and the cry was
raised, "Where is the body of the king?" They
found it at last, says Jornandes, after a long search,
lying under a heap of dead. Who knows if they
really did find it? In those hot July days it might
not be an easy task to identify a body gashed with
wounds and lying under a pile of slain. Thoris-
mund's interest was obviously to get his father's
funeral and his own elevation to the sovereignty
accomplished as speedily as possible. Perhaps he
did not insist too punctiliously on the recovery of
the right corpse out of all that vast slaughter-
house, the one strangely missing body out of all
those acres upon acres of dead Romans, Goths, and
Huns.'

And so, M. Delacourt suggests, the body round
which the Visigothic warriors circled, singing their
wild chorus of lamentation, may have been not that
of Theodoric at all. He all the while lay in that
shallow trench in the gravel-bed at Pouan, not to
be disturbed there till Jacques Bonhomme, in blouse
and sabots, came with his pick-axe in 1842 to break
the repose of centuries. The story is well imagin-
ed, and certainly cannot be pronounced impossible.
What militates most against it is that Jornandes

says that the body was borne out to burial *with its ornaments*¹. In its favour is a certain peculiar silence of his concerning the actual interment of the corpse. He may have felt that it was improbable that the Goths should have left their beloved chieftain lying there in alien territory, in the cold Catalaunian plains, and yet no tradition authorised him to say that they took him back to the sepulchre of his predecessors at Toulouse, a course which Thorismund may have had sufficient reasons for emphatically prohibiting.

Finally, whether this body and these ornaments be Theodoric's, or belong to one of the 'turba regum,' who swarmed around the car of Attila; in either case their discovery, coupled as it appears to be with that of numerous other human remains in the not distant village of Martroy, seems to add great probability to the theory that here and not at Chalons (two days' march to the northward) was fought the great battle which decided that Europe was to belong to the German and the Roman, not to the Tartar race.

¹ 'Cum suis insignibus.'

NOTE A. ON THE SITE OF THE SO-CALLED BATTLE OF
CHALONS.

NOTE A. As such recent historians as Aschbach (*Geschichte der Visigothen*) and Thierry (*Histoire d'Attila*) place the site of the great battle at Chalons-sur-Marne, it may be well to show how little there is to support this view in the earliest authorities.

The place which we now call Chalons was probably under the Romans named Duro-Catalaunum. It was the chief place of the Catalauni, a tribe who dwelt next to the Suessiones. As in so many other parts of Gaul, the old tribal name has finally prevailed, and Duro-Catalaunum has become Chalons, as Lutetia Parisiorum is Paris, Augusta Suessionum, Soissons, and so on. In Roman miles (ten of which are about equal to nine English), and by the Roman roads, Chalons was 170 miles distant from Metz, and 51 from Troyes. Fanum Minervae, now La Cheppe, where the so-called 'Camp of Attila' is to be found, is about ten miles to the north-east of Chalons 'as the crow flies,' but owing to the interposition of the river Vèle seems to have been 55 miles by road (which went northwards to Rheims, and then returned on the other bank of the river to Chalons). This camp is square, of Roman origin, and was therefore certainly not constructed by Attila even if he encamped inside it.

We may now consider the words of the original authorities.

Jornandes says, 'They come together therefore at the Catalaunian plains, which are also called the *Maurician* plains, 100 Gaulish leagues in length and 70 in breadth.' (Convenitur itaque in campos Catalaunicos qui et Mauricii nominantur e leugas ut Galli vocant in longum tenentes et lxx in latum.) These measurements would cover the whole space between 48° and 50° N. latitude, and 3° and 5° E.

longitude, or a district at least equal to the old French province of Champagne. NOTE A.

Gregory of Tours says (ii. 7) 'Aetius and Theodore put Attila to flight [from Orleans], and he, going to the *Mauriac* plain, arrays his troops for battle,' ('*Attilam fugant qui Mauriacum campum adiens se praecingit ad bellum*'). Here we have no mention of the Catalaunian, but only of the *Mauriac* plain.

Idatius (28th year of Theodosius II) puts the battle 'in the Catalaunian plains not far from the city of Metz which the Huns had broken up' ('*in campis Catalaunicis haud longè de civitate quam effregerant Mertis*'). This statement is evidently quite wide of the mark, and shows that the Gallician bishop had such vague notions of the geography of north-eastern Gaul that we cannot safely accept his guidance.

The *continuer of Prosper* gives the most precise details: 'The battle was fought at the fifth milestone from Troyes, at a place called *Maurica* in Champagne' ('*Pugnatum est in quinto milliario de Trecas, loco nuncupato Mauricâ in Campaniâ*').

Now when we look (1) at the exceedingly wide range which, as we see from *Jornandes*, was given to the term *Campi Catalaunici*; (2) at the persistent reference to the *Campus Mauriacus* or some similar name as the field of battle; (3) at the fact that there is still existing a place called *Mery-sur-Seine*, which may fairly be supposed to represent the ancient *Mauriacum*; (4) at the situation of this place, not indeed at the fifth milestone from Troyes, apparently about twenty miles distant from it, but situated in a plain which may very probably have been called the *Campus Mauriacensis*, and may have extended to the fifth milestone from Troyes; (5) at the great strategical importance of Troyes, placed at the centre of a perfect cobweb of roads, in the Roman time as well as now, and commanding apparently the passage of at least one important river; considering all these facts and comparing them with the authorities, we must, as it appears to me, accept the conclusion that the battle was fought

NOTE A. near to Mery-sur-Seine, but upon widely extended lines, and that it may easily have rolled over into what were properly called the Catalaunian plains (the Catalauni being the next tribe to the Tricasses), though it cannot have extended as far as the modern Chalons-sur-Marne which was two days' march from the field of battle.

It will be observed that this argument represents the conclusion to which we are brought by a simple consideration of the language of the chroniclers, and is wholly independent of the interesting discoveries described in the Memoire of M. Peigné Delacourt to which reference is made in the text.

[Von Wietersheim takes the same view as to the site of the battle.]

CHAPTER IV.

ATILA IN ITALY.

Authorities.

A chapter in JORNANDES and a paragraph in the HISTORIA BOOK 11. MISCELLA, with one curious anecdote from SUIDAS the well-known lexicographer (of uncertain date), are all the materials that we possess for the history of this immeasurably important campaign, except the brief memoranda of the Annalists.

CH. 4.

451.

IN the summer of 451, Attila, with his beaten army, recrossed the Rhine, and dismissed the courageous Lupus with a safe-conduct back to Troyes, bidding his chief minister and interpreter Onégesh intercede with the holy man that he might receive the benefit of his prayers.

Attila's
return to
Pannonia.

All that autumn and winter we may imagine him dwelling, moody and sore of heart, within his wooden stockade upon the plains of Hungary, receiving the homage of his nobles as he drank to them out of his goblet of ivy-wood, scowling while all around were laughing at the gabble and the jests of Zercon, or passing his fingers through the dark locks of Ernak while he whispered to himself, 'This boy shall build up the house of Attila.'

With spring, the spring of 452, came back the longing for 'the joys of strife¹,' and the deter-

Italian
campaign
of 452.

¹ 'Certaminis gaudia' (Jornandes, xxxix).

BOOK II. mination to wipe out the shame of the Mauriac
 CH. 4. plains on some fresh battle-field. But this time he
 452. would not try conclusions with the hardy Visigoth.
 Aetius, Valentinian, Italy, should bear the sole
 weight of his revenge¹. He marched, probably
 through the passes of the Julian Alps and down
 the valley of the Frigidus, by the route already
 trodden by Theodosius and Alaric, and stood, per-
 haps before the spring had ripened into summer,
 before the walls of Aquileia.

Situation
 and im-
 portance of
 Aquileia.

This town was then, both as a fortress and a
 commercial emporium, second to none in Northern
 Italy. It was situated at the northernmost point
 of the Gulf of Hadria, about twenty miles north-
 west of Trieste, and the place where it once stood
 is now in the Austrian dominions, just over the
 border which separates them from the kingdom of
 Italy. In the year 181 B.C. a Roman colony had
 been sent to this far corner of Italy to serve as an
 outpost against some intrusive tribes, called by the
 vague name of Gauls, who were pressing into the
 Adriatic shores over the passes of the Carnic Alps,

¹ Possibly there had intervened some slackening of the alliance
 or even actual dissensions between Ravenna and Toulouse.
 Jornandes says that Attila watched his opportunity in the de-
 parture of the Visigoths, and seeing, what he had often hoped
 for, his enemies divided into two parties, with a feeling of
 security moved forward his array for the destruction of the
 Romans. ('Attila vero nacta occasione de recessu Vesego-
 tharum et, quod saepe optaverat, cernens hostium solutionem
 per partes, mox jam securus ad oppressionem Romanorum movit
 procinctum.')

those Alps which are so familiar to the sojourn-BOOK 11.
ers in Venice as 'blue Friuli's mountains.' The CH. 4.
colonists built their town about four miles from 452.
the sea by the banks of the river Aquilo¹ (the
River of the North Wind) from whence it probably
derived its name. Possessing a good harbour, with
which it was connected by a navigable river, Aquileia
gradually became the chief entrepôt for the com-
merce between Italy and what are now the Illy-
rian provinces of Austria. Under the Emperors,
and especially after Trajan's conquest of Dacia,
these provinces, rich in mineral and agricultural
wealth, and enjoying long intervals of settled
government, attained to a high degree of pros-
perity, and had the glory of seeing many Illyrian
brows bound with the imperial diadem. Naturally
Aquileia rose in importance with the countries
whose broker she was. She sent the wine, the oil,
the costly woven fabrics of the Mediterranean pro-
vinces over the Julian and Carnic Alps into Pan-
nonia and Noricum, and she received in return their
cattle, their hides, amber from the shores of the
Baltic², and long files of slaves taken in the border
wars which were being perpetually waged with the
Germanic and Slavonic tribes beyond the Danube

¹ Otherwise called the Natiso, now the Isonzo.

² Mommsen thinks that the traffic in amber between Germany and Italy may be traced back as far as the times of the Roman kings. A silver coin of the Etrurian town, Populonia, of very early date, has been found, he says, 'on the old amber-route in the district of Posen' (Hist. of Rome, book I, chap. 13).

BOOK II. and the Carpathians. The third century after the

CH. 4.

452.

Christian era was probably the most flourishing period of her commercial greatness, some of the springs of which must have been dried up by the troubles with the barbarians after the loss of the Province of Dacia. Still, as far as can be ascertained from the language of contemporary authors, she was at the time at which we have now arrived entitled to contest with Milan and Ravenna the distinction of being the most important city of Northern Italy. Ecclesiastical had followed commercial supremacy, and the Bishop of Aquileia ruled as Metropolitan over the provinces of Western Illyricum and Venetia, so that, between the years 350 and 450 Silistria on the lower Danube and Verona in the heart of Lombardy, both (though not both at the same time) owned his spiritual sway¹. In a military point of view the city held a yet higher place. The strength which she derived from the river, the sea, perhaps the intervening marshes, had been increased by the elaborate fortifications of successive emperors. The savage

¹ Probably the ecclesiastical limits would so far agree with the political, that the portion of Illyricum which was assigned to the Eastern sceptre at the accession of Theodosius ceased before long to be within the obedience of the See of Aquileia. On the other hand Verona and the whole of Western Venetia were (possibly as some indemnification for this loss) transferred from the metropolitan jurisdiction of Milan to that of Aquileia, at the death of St. Ambrose or shortly after that event. Such at least is the conclusion of Count Maffei (*Verona Illustrata*, book x), who has carefully examined both the political and ecclesiastical relations of Aquileia with the Venetian province.

Maximin (dethroned by the Senate in 238) had in vain attempted to take it, and had eventually been murdered under its walls by his mutinous soldiers. Equally vain had been the efforts of the army of Julian more than a century later, though they built huge wooden towers and floated them on rafts down the stream past the walls of the city. The inhabitants set the towers on fire, and were continuing a vigorous resistance when the news which arrived of the death of Constantius II, in whose cause they were fighting, released them from the necessity of further defence, and justified them in opening their gates to Julian now sole and lawful Emperor. Rightly therefore might Aquileia have claimed to herself the proud title which Metz till lately bore, 'the virgin fortress¹;' and we can now understand why it was that Aetius, who apparently regarded the defence of all the rest of Northern Italy as hopeless, left troops—we know not how many, nor for how long a siege prepared—to hold the great fortress by the Natiso against the enemy.

The Roman soldiers were of unusually good quality and high courage, and under their guidance the town made so long and stubborn a defence that Attila's soldiers began to weary of their work. Ominous murmurs began to be heard in the camp,

¹ The sudden attack by which Theodosius wrested it from Maximus (388) was so completely a surprise that the city can hardly be deemed to have lost its character of impregnability thereby (see Zosimus, iv. 46).

BOOK II.
CH. 4.
452.

Attila's
siege of
Aquileia.

BOOK II.
CH. 4.

452.

and it seemed as if Aquileia was about to add another and more terrible name to the list of her unsuccessful assailants. But just then, while Attila was pacing round her walls, moodily deliberating with himself whether to go or stay, the flapping of wings and the cry of birds overhead arrested his attention. He looked up, and saw the white storks¹ which had built their nests in the roofs of the city, rising high in the air, and inviting their callow young to follow them, evidently with the intention of leaving the beleaguered town, and contrary to their usual habits, betaking themselves to the open country. The mother-wit of the Hunnish chieftain caught at the expressive augury. 'Lo, there!' he cried to his grumbling soldiers, 'See those birds, whose instinct tells them of futurity; they are leaving the city which they know will perish, the fortress which they know will fall. It is no mere chance, no vague uncertainty which guides their movements. They are changed from all their natural love of home and human kind by their knowledge of the coming terror.' The wild hearts of the Huns were stirred by the speech of their king, and took courage from this fresh voice of Nature on their side². They again pushed up their engines to the walls, they

¹ 'Animadvertit candidas aves, id est ciconias, quæ in fastigio domorum nidificant de civitate foetus suos trahere' (Jordanes, xlii).

² It is important to remember the tradition that they had been guided into Europe by a hind, a somewhat similar kind of augury.

plied the slings and catapults with renewed energy, and, as it were in an instant, they found themselves masters of the town.

BOOK 11.
СН. 4.
452.

In proportion to the stubbornness of the defence was the severity of the punishment meted out to Aquileia. The Roman soldiers were, no doubt, all slain. Attila was not a man to encumber himself with prisoners. The town was absolutely given up to the rage, the lust, and the greed of the Tartar horde who had so long chafed around its walls. The only incident of the capture which enables us to grasp more definitely these commonplaces of barbaric conquest, is the story (told in the *Historia Miscella*, book xiv) of a noble lady, named Digna, eminent for beauty and virtue, whose house was situated upon the walls of the city. Close to her house was a high tower, overlooking the glassy waters ('*vitreis fluentis*') of the Natiso. When she saw that the city was taken, in order to save her honour from the scornful outrages of those filthiest of foes ('*sordidissimis hostibus*'), she ascended the tower, and having covered her head in the old Roman fashion, plunged into the stream below.

When the barbarians could plunder no more, they probably used fire, for the very buildings of Aquileia perished, so that, as Jornandes tells us, in his time, a century later than the siege, scarcely the vestiges of it yet remained. A few houses may have been left standing, and others must have slowly gathered round them, for the Patriarch of Aquileia retained all through the middle ages con-

BOOK II. siderable remains of his old ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and a large and somewhat stately cathedral
 CH. 4.

452. was reared there in the eleventh century. But the City of the North Wind never really recovered from the blow. Her star had fallen from the firmament, and from this time she virtually disappears from history. At the present day two or three mean-looking little villages cower amid the vast enclosure, which is chiefly filled with maize-fields and cherry-trees, while the high-pitched roof of the Duomo, with its tall detached campanile, dominates the plain.

Destruction of cities of Venetia.

The terrible invaders, made more wrathful and more terrible by the resistance of Aquileia, streamed on through the trembling cities of Venetia. Each earlier stage in the itinerary shows a town blotted out by their truly Tartar genius for destruction.

Concordia. At the distance of thirty-one miles from Aquileia stood the flourishing colony of Julia Concordia, so named, probably, in commemoration of the universal peace which, 480 years before, Augustus had established in the world. Concordia was treated as Aquileia, and only an insignificant little village now remains to show where it once stood.

Altinum. At another interval of thirty-one miles stood Altinum, with its white villas clustering round the curves of its lagunes, and rivalling Baiae in its luxurious charms. Altinum was effaced as Concordia and as

Patavium. Aquileia. Yet another march of thirty-two miles brought the squalid invaders to Patavium, proud of its imagined Trojan origin, and, with better reason,

proud of having given birth to Livy. Patavium, BOOK II.
too, was levelled with the ground. True it has CH. 4.
not, like its sister towns, remained in the nothing- 452.
ness to which Attila reduced it. It is now

‘Many domed Padua proud,’

but all its great buildings date from the middle ages. Only a few broken friezes and a few inscriptions in its museum exist as memorials of the classical Patavium.

As the Huns marched further away from Aquileia, and the remembrance of their detention under its ramparts became less vivid, they were less eager to spend their strength in mere blind rage of demolition. Vicenza, Verona, Brescia, Bergamo, all opened their gates at their approach, for the terror which the fate of Aquileia had inspired was on every heart. In these towns, and in Milan and Pavia (Ticinum), which followed their example, the Huns enjoyed doubtless to the full their wild revel of lust and spoliation, but they left the buildings unharmed, and they carried captive the inhabitants instead of murdering them¹.

Attila in
the upper
valley of
the Po.

¹ This distinction between the cities of Eastern Venetia and their Western neighbours, which is quite evident to any one at the present day who is in quest of Roman remains, is very clearly brought out by the *Historia Miscella* (Book xiv) which is here our best authority. ‘Concordiam, Altinum sive (= et) Patavium vicinas Aquilejæ civitates, illius instar demoliens solo coæquavit. Exinde per universas Venetiarum urbes, hoc est Vincentiam, Veronam, Brixiam, Pergamum, seu (= et) reliquas, nullo resistente, Hunni bacchabantur, Mediolanum Ticinumque pari sorte diripiunt, ab igne tamen abstinentes et ferro.

BOOK II. At Milan a characteristic incident, which rests
 CH. 4. on fair if not contemporaneous evidence, is said to
 452. have occurred. The Hunnish king took up his
 quarters at the Imperial Palace, the stately edifice
 in which Constantine signed the edict for the le-
 galization of Christianity, the same edifice in which,
 eighty years later, Theodosius expired, sick at heart
 for the ruin which he saw impending over the
 Empire. Besides other works of painting and
 sculpture with which the palace was no doubt lib-
 erally adorned, Attila beheld a picture representing
 'The Triumph of Rome over the Barbarians.' Here
 were the two Augusti of the East and West seated
 on their golden thrones, and here in the front of
 the picture were the figures of the vanquished
 Scythians, some slain, others crouching in abject
 submission before the feet of the Emperors. Even
 so may the King of Prussia have looked, in the
 long galleries of Versailles, upon the glowing battle-
 pieces in which the genius of Lebrun and of Vernet
 commemorates the prowess of France and the
 humiliations of Germany. Attila took the insult as
 aimed at his own ancestors, though it is almost
 certain that the 'Scythians' whom any painter at
 Milan delineated would be Goths rather than Huns.
 With that grim humour which flashed forth now
 and again upon the sullen background of his charac-
 ter, he called for an artist whom he commissioned to
 paint, perhaps on the opposite wall, a rival picture.
 In this, king Attila sat on his throne, and the two
 Emperors bowed low before him. One still bore

Attila at
 Mediola-
 num.

upon his shoulders a large miller's sack filled with pieces of gold, the other was already pouring out the contents of a similar sack at his feet. This reference to the tributary obligations which Attila had forced upon both Rome and Constantinople harmonises with the language of Priscus, and seems to invest the story with a semblance of probability. Would that amidst the subsequent changes of fortune which have befallen the fair city of Milan, notwithstanding the despair of the Ostrogoths and the rage of Barbarossa, that picture might have survived to tell us what the great Hun looked like in his pride, the artistic Theodosius and the sensual Valentinian in their humiliation¹.

The valley of the Po was now wasted to the heart's content of the invaders. Should they cross the Apennines and blot out Rome as they had blotted out Aquileia from among the cities of the world? This was the great question that was being debated in the Hunnish camp, and strange to say, the voices were not all for war. Already Italy began to strike that strange awe into the hearts of her northern conquerors which so often in

¹ This story is preserved for us in the work—half dictionary, half encyclopædia—of Suidas. Unfortunately his own date is so uncertain, and so many additions have been made to the original work, that it is quite impossible to say from external evidence whether this anecdote was committed to writing in the 5th century or at a much later period. Suidas relates it twice, once under the heading *Κόρυκος* and once under *Μεδιόλανον*. The former word, which signifies 'a sack' is of very infrequent occurrence, and it has been suggested that this is probably the cause of the preservation of the story.

BOOK II. later ages has been her best defence. The remem-
 CH. 4. brance of Alaric, cut off by a mysterious death

452. immediately after his capture of Rome, was present
 in the mind of Attila, and was frequently insisted
 upon by his counsellors, who seem to have had a
 foreboding that only while he lived would they be
 great and prosperous.

Roman
 embassy
 to the
 Hunnish
 camp.

While this discussion was going forward in the
 barbarian camp, all voices were hushed, and the
 attention of all was aroused, by the news of the
 arrival of an embassy from Rome. What had been
 going on in that city it is not easy to ascertain.
 The Emperor seems to have been dwelling there,
 not at Ravenna. Aetius shows a strange lack of
 courage or of resource, and we find it difficult to
 recognise in him the victor of the Mauriac plains.
 He appears to have been even meditating flight
 from Italy, and to have thought of persuading
 Valentinian to share his exile¹. But counsels a
 shade less timorous prevailed. Some one suggested
 that possibly even the Hun might be satiated with
 havoc, and that an embassy might assist to miti-
 gate the remainder of his resentment. Accordingly
 ambassadors were sent in the once mighty name of
 'the Emperor and the Senate and People of Rome'
 to crave for peace, and these were the men who
 were now ushered into the camp of Attila.

¹ This hint as to the feebleness of Aetius is to be found in
 Prosper of Aquitaine—'Nihil duce nostro Aetio secundum
 prioris belli opera prospiciente; ita ut ne clusuris quidem Alpium
 quibus hostes prohiberi potuerant, uteretur; hoc solum spei suis
 superesse existimans, si ab omni Italiâ cum Imperatore discederet.'

The envoys had been well chosen to satisfy that punctilious pride which insisted that only men of the highest dignity among the Romans should be sent to treat with the Lord of Scythia and Germany¹. Avienus, who had, two years before, worn the robes of consul, was one of the ambassadors. Trigetius, who had wielded the power of a prefect, and who, seventeen years before, had been despatched upon a similar mission to Gaiseric the Vandal, was another. But it was not upon these men, but upon their greater colleague that the eyes of all the barbarian warriors and statesmen were fixed. Leo, Bishop of Rome, had come on behalf of his flock, to sue for peace from the idolater.

BOOK II.
CH. 4.

452.
The Roman ambassadors.

The two men who had thus at last met by the banks of the Mincio are certainly the grandest figures whom the fifth century can show to us, at any rate since Alaric vanished from the scene. Attila we by this time know well enough: adequately to describe Pope Leo I, we should have to travel too far into the alien domain of ecclesiastical

Character
of Pope
Leo I.

¹ We know, from a letter of the Ostrogothic king Theodoric that the father of his Secretary Cassiodorus was sent on an embassy to Attila and obtained peace for Rome. (Cassiodori *Variarum*, i. 4.) Some historians have perplexed themselves by trying to reconcile that account with this of the embassy of Leo and his two colleagues. But it seems much more probable that the embassy of the father of Cassiodorus was an earlier one, perhaps one of the many relating to the vases of Sirmium. He was accompanied by Carpilio, son of Aetius, who, as we learn from Priscus (p. 179, Bonn edition), had passed many years as a hostage at Attila's court.

BOOK II. history. Chosen pope in the year 440, he was now
 CH. 4. about half way through his long pontificate, one of
 452. the few which have nearly rivalled the twenty-five
 years traditionally assigned to St. Peter¹. A firm
 disciplinarian, not to say a persecutor, he had
 caused the Priscillianists of Spain and the Mani-
 chees of Rome to feel his heavy hand. A powerful
 rather than subtle theologian, he had asserted the
 claims of Christian common sense as against the
 endless refinements of Oriental speculation concern-
 ing the nature of the Son of God. Like an able
 Roman general, he had traced in his letters on the
 Eutychian Controversy the lines of the fortress in
 which the defenders of the Catholic verity were
 thenceforward to entrench themselves, and from
 which they were to repel the assaults of Monophy-
 sites on the one hand, and of Nestorians on the
 other. These lines had been enthusiastically ac-
 cepted by the great Council of Chalcedon (held in
 the year of Attila's Gaulish campaign), and remain
 from that day to this the authoritative utterance
 of the Church concerning the mysterious union of
 the Godhead and the Manhood in the person of
 Jesus Christ.

And all these gifts of will, of intellect, and of
 soul, were employed by Leo with undeviating con-
 stancy, with untired energy, in furthering his great

¹ 'Non videbis annos Petri,' the exhortation which is said to
 be addressed to each Pope on his accession, and which no Pope
 till Pius IX has lived to falsify. The Pontificate of Leo I
 lasted only twenty-one years.

aim, the exaltation of the dignity of the Popedom, BOOK II.
the conversion of the admitted primacy of the CH. 4.
bishops of Rome into an absolute and world-wide 452.
spiritual monarchy. Whatever our opinions may be as to the influence of this spiritual monarchy on the happiness of the world, or its congruity with the character of the Teacher in whose words it professed to root itself, we cannot withhold a tribute of admiration from the high temper of this Roman bishop, who in the ever-deepening degradation of his country still despaired not, but had the courage and endurance to work for a far-distant future, who when the Roman was becoming the common drudge and footstool of all nations, still remembered the proud words, '*Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento!*' and under the very shadow of Attila and Gaiseric prepared for the city of Romulus a new and spiritual dominion, vaster and more enduring than any which had been won for her by Julius or by Hadrian.

Such were the two men who stood face to face Interview by the Mincio. in the summer of 452 upon the plains of Lombardy. The barbarian king had all material power in his hand, and he was working but for a twelve-month. The Pontiff had no power but in the world of intellect, and his fabric was to last fourteen centuries. They met, as we have said, by the banks of the Mincio. Jornandes tells us that it was 'where the river is crossed by many wayfarers coming and going.' Some writers think that his words point to the ground now occupied by the

BOOK II. celebrated fortress of Peschiera, close to the point
 CH. 4.

452. Others place the interview at Governolo, a little village hard by the junction of the Mincio and the Po². If the latter theory be true, and it seems to fit well with the route which would probably be taken by Attila, the meeting took place in Virgil's country, and almost in sight of the very farm where Tityrus and Meliboeus chatted at evening under the beech tree.

Complete
 success of
 Leo's em-
 bassy.

Leo's success as an ambassador was complete. Attila laid aside all the fierceness of his anger and promised to return across the Danube, and to live thenceforward at peace with the Romans. But, in his usual style, in the midst of reconciliation he left a loophole for future wrath, for 'he insisted still on this point above all, that Honoria, the sister of the Emperor, and the daughter of the Augusta Placidia, should be sent to him with the portion of the royal wealth which was her due; and he threatened that unless this was done he would lay upon Italy a far heavier punishment than any which it had yet borne.'

Legendary
 amplifica-
 tions.

But, for the present, at any rate, the tide of devastation was turned, and few events more

¹ This is the opinion of Maffei (*Verona Illustrata*, ii. 377, ed. 1825).

² This is the opinion of Muratori (*Annali d'Italia*, iii. 154) and has also in its favour the authority of Andrea Dandolo (Doge of Venice, 1343-1354), whatever that authority may be worth (*And. Danduli Chronicon*, book v, cap. 5, § 6).

powerfully impressed the imagination of that new BOOK II.
and blended world which was now standing at the CH. 4.
threshold of the dying Empire than this retreat 452.
of Attila, the dreaded king of kings, before the
unarmed successor of St. Peter. Later ages have
encrusted the history with legends of their own.
The great picture in the Vatican, which represents
the abject terror of the Huns in beholding St.
Peter and St. Paul in the air championing the
faithful city, gives that version of the story which
has received eternal currency from the mint-mark
impressed by the genius of Raphael. As mythology
has added to the wonder, so criticism has sought
of later days to detract from it. The troops of
Marcian, the Eastern Emperor, are said to have
been in motion. Aetius, according to one account,
had at length bestirred himself and cut off many
of the Huns. But on carefully examining the best
authorities we find the old impression strengthened,
that neither miracle, nor pious fraud, nor military
expediency determined the retreat of Attila. He
was already predisposed to moderation by the
counsels of his ministers. The awe of Rome was
upon him and upon them, and he was forced inces-
santly to ponder the question, 'What if I conquer
like Alaric, to die like him?' Upon these doubts
and ponderings of his supervened the stately pre-
sence of Leo, a man of holy life, firm will, daunt-
less courage—that, be sure, Attila perceived in the
first moments of their interview—and besides this
holding an office honoured and venerated through

BOOK II. all the civilized world. The Barbarian yielded to
 CR. 4. his spell as he had yielded to that of Lupus of
 452. Troyes, and, according to a tradition which, it
 must be admitted, is not very well authenticated,
 he jocularly excused his unaccustomed gentleness
 by saying that 'he knew how to conquer *men*, but
 the lion and the wolf (Leo and Lupus) had learned
 how to conquer him.'

Effect on
the au-
thority of
the Papacy. The renown and the gratitude which Leo I earned
 by this interposition placed the Papal Chair many
 steps higher in the estimation both of Rome and
 of the world ('*Urbis et Orbis*'). In the dark days
 which were coming the senate and people of Rome
 were not likely to forget that when the successor
 of Caesar had been proved useless, the successor of
 Peter had been a very present help. And thus it
 is no paradox to say that indirectly the king of
 the Huns contributed, more perhaps than any other
 historical personage, towards the creation of that
 mighty factor in the politics of medieval Italy, the
 Pope-King of Rome.

Attila
the true
founder
of Venice.

His share in the creation of another important
 actor on the same stage, the Republic of Venice,
 has yet to be noticed. The tradition which asserts
 that it and its neighbour cities in the Lagunes
 were peopled by fugitives from the Hunnish in-
 vasion of 452, is so constant, and in itself so
 probable, that we seem bound to accept it as
 substantially true, though contemporary, or nearly
 contemporary evidence to the fact is utterly
 wanting.

The thought of 'the glorious city in the sea' so dazzles our imaginations when we turn our thoughts towards Venice, that we must take a little pains to free ourselves from the spell and reproduce the aspect of the desolate islands and far-stretching wastes of sand and sea, to which the fear of Attila drove the delicately-nurtured Roman provincials for a habitation. And as in describing the Hiongnu at their first appearance in history we had to refer to Physical Geography for an account of that vast Asian upland which was their home, so now that we are about to part with the Huns for ever we must hear what the same science has to tell us of that very different region (the north-eastern corner of Italy) in which they who came but to destroy unwittingly built up an empire.

If we examine on the map the well-known and deep recess of the Adriatic Sea, we shall at once be struck by one marked difference between its eastern and its northern shores. For three hundred miles down the Dalmatian coast not one large river, scarcely a considerable stream, descends from the too closely towering Dinaric mountains to the sea. If we turn now to the north-western angle which formed the shore of the Roman province of Venetia, we find the coast-line broken by at least seven streams, two of which are great rivers. Let us enumerate them. Past the desolate site of Aquileia flows forth that *Isonzo*, once called the river of the North Wind, with which we have already made acquaintance. It

BOOK II.
CH. 4.

Streams
pouring
into the
north-west
corner
of the
Adriatic.

BOOK II. rises in an all but waterless range of mountains on
 CH. 4. the edge of Carniola¹, and flows milk-white with its Alpine deposits through the little Austrian county of Goritzia. *Tagliamento* and *Livenza* rise in 'blue Friuli's mountains,' and just before they reach the sea encircle the town of Concordia, with which we have also made acquaintance, as the second Italian city which Attila destroyed. Rising among the mysterious Dolomites, and flowing through Cadore and Titian's country, then past Belluno and Treviso, comes a longer and more important river, the *Piave*. The shorter but lovely stream of the *Brenta*, rising within a few miles of Trient, and just missing the same Dolomite ancestry, washes with her green and rapid waters the walls of Bassano, full of memories of Ezzelin's tyrannies, and of a whole family of Venetian painters, and then, running within sight of Padua, empties her waters into the sea a few miles south of Venice². *Adige* comes next, dear to the hearts of the pedestrian traveller in South Tyrol, who has through many a mile of his pilgrimage towards Italy been cheered by the loquacious companionship of its waters, who has seen its tributary, the Eisach, swirling round the porphyry cliffs of Botzen, and the united stream rushing under the old battlemented bridge

¹ See a striking description of the upper valley of the Isonzo in 'The Dolomite Mountains,' by Gilbert and Churchill, p. 233.

² The mouth of the Brenta was formerly just opposite to the island of Rialto. The Venetian canal-makers took the river round to Brondolo.

at Verona. Last and greatest of all, the *Po*, the Eridanus of the poets, rising under the shadow of BOOK II.
CH. 4. Monte Viso, flowing nearly 300 miles through the rich plain of Lombardy, and receiving in its course countless affluents from the southern gorges of the Alps and the northern face of the Apennines, empties its wealth of waters into the Adriatic about a dozen miles from the all but united mouths of the Brenta and the Adige. The Delta of this abundant, but comparatively sluggish river, projecting into the Adriatic Sea, makes a marked alteration in the Italian coast-line, and causes some surprise that such a Delta should not yet have received its Alexandria; that Venice to the north, and Ravenna to the south should have risen into greatness, while scarcely a village marks the exit of the *Po*.

These seven streams, whose mouths are crowded into less than eighty miles of coast, drain an area which, reckoning from Monte Viso to the Terglou Alps (the source of the Isonzo), must be 450 miles in length, and may average 200 miles in breadth, which is bordered on one side by the highest mountains in Europe, snow-covered, glacier-strewn, wrinkled and twisted into a thousand valleys and narrow defiles, each of which sends down its river or its rivulet to swell the great outpour.

For our present purpose, and as a worker out of Venetian history, *Po*, notwithstanding the far greater volume of his waters, is of less importance

BOOK II.
CH. 4.

Formation
of the *lido*
and the
lagune.

than the six other smaller streams that we named before him. He, carrying down the fine alluvial soil of Lombardy, goes on lazily adding foot by foot to the depth of his Delta, and mile by mile to its extent. They, swiftly hurrying over their shorter course from mountain to sea, scatter indeed many fragments, detached from their native rocks, over the first meadows which they meet with in the plain, but carry some also far out to sea, and then, behind the bulwark which they thus have made, deposit the finer alluvial particles with which they too are laden. Thus we get the two characteristic features of this ever-changing coast-line, the *lido* and the *laguna*. The *lido*, founded upon the masses of rock, is a long, thin slip of *terra firma* which forms a sort of advanced guard of the land. The *laguna*, occupying the interval between the lido and the true shore, is a wide expanse of waters generally very few feet in depth, with a bottom of fine sand, and with a few channels of deeper water, the representatives of the forming rivers, winding intricately among them. In such a configuration of land and water the state of the tide makes a striking difference in the scene. And unlike the rest of the Mediterranean, the Adriatic does possess a tide, small it is true in comparison with the great tides of ocean, for the whole difference between high and low water at the flood is not more than six feet, and the average flow is said not to amount to more than two feet six inches, but even this flux is

sufficient to produce large tracts of sea which the BOOK II.
reflux converts into square miles of oozy sand¹. CH. 4.

Here, between sea and land, upon this detritus 452.
of the rivers, settled the Detritus of Humanity.
The Gothic and the Lombard invasions contributed probably their share of fugitives, but fear of the Hunnish world-waster (whose very name, according to some, was derived from one of the mighty rivers of Russia²) was the great 'degrading' influence that carried down the fragments of Roman civilization and strewed them over the desolate lagunes of the Adriatic.

The inhabitants of Aquileia, or at least the Allocation
feeble remnant that escaped the sword of Attila, of the
took refuge at Grado. Concordia migrated to refugees
Caprularia (now Caorle). The inhabitants of Altium among the
num, abandoning their ruined villas, founded their villages by
new habitations upon seven islands at the mouth the la-
of the Piave, which, according to tradition, they gunes.
named from the seven gates of their old city—
Torcellus, Maiurbius, Boreana, Ammiana, Constan-
tium, and Anianum. The representatives of
some of these names, Torcello, Mazzorbo, Burano,

¹ No reader of the *Stones of Venice* will need to be reminded of that magnificent chapter, 'The Throne,' at the commencement of the Second Volume, in which the influence of this Adriatic tide on the history and architecture of Venice, and the whole connection between the physical configuration and political development of the city, are worked out with inimitable clearness and force.

² Etzel = Attila is said to have been the Tartar name of the Volga.

BOOK II. are familiar sounds to the Venetian at the present
 CH. 4. day. From Padua came the largest stream of
 452. emigrants. They left the tomb of their mythical ancestor, Antenor, and built their humble dwellings upon the islands of Rivus Altus and Methamaucus, better known to us as Rialto and Malamocco. This Paduan settlement was one day to be known to the world by the name of Venice. But let us not suppose that the future Queen of the Adriatic sprang into existence at a single bound like Constantinople or Alexandria. For 250 years, that is to say for eight generations, the refugees on the islands of the Adriatic prolonged an obscure and squalid existence,—fishing, salt-manufacturing, damming out the waves with wattled vine-branches, driving piles into the sand-banks¹; and thus gradually extending the area of their villages. Still these were but fishing villages, loosely confederated together, loosely governed, poor and insignificant; so that the anonymous geographer of Ravenna, writing in the seventh century, can only say of them²: ‘In the country of Venetia there are certain islands which are inhabited by men.’ This seems to have been their condition, though perhaps gradually growing in commercial importance, until at the beginning of the eighth century the concentration of political authority in the hands of the first doge, and the recognition of

¹ See the well-known letter of Cassiodorus, secretary to Theodoric the Ostrogoth (523).

² Book v, cap. 25.

the Rialto cluster of islands as the capital of the BOOK 11.
confederacy, started the Republic on a career of CH. 4.
success and victory, in which for seven centuries 452.
she met no lasting check.

But this lies far beyond the limits of our present Cause of
subject. It must be again said that we have not of the safety
to think of 'the pleasant place of all festivity,' but of Venice.
of a few huts among the sand-banks, inhabited by
Roman provincials, who mournfully recall their
charred and ruined habitations by the Brenta and
the Piave. The sea alone does not constitute
their safety. If that were all, the pirate ships of
the Vandal Gaiseric might repeat upon their poor
dwellings all the terror of Attila. But it is in their
amphibious life, in that strange blending of land
and sea which is exhibited by the lagunes, that
their safety lies. Only experienced pilots can
guide a vessel of any considerable draft through
the mazy channels of deep water which intersect
these lagunes; and should an enemy's approach
seem a very imminent peril, they will defend
themselves, not like the Dutch by cutting the dykes
which barricade them from the ocean, but by pull-
ing up the poles which even those pilots need to
indicate their pathway through the waters.

There, then, engaged in their humble beaver-like Contrast
labours, we leave for the present the Venetian between
refugees from the rage of Attila. But even while Venice
protesting, it is impossible not to let into our and her
minds some thought of what those desolate fishing founder.
villages will one day become. The dim religious

BOOK II. light, half-revealing the slowly-gathered glories of

CH. 4.

452.

St. Mark's; the Ducal Palace—that history in stone; the Rialto, with its babble of many languages; the Piazza, with its flocks of fearless pigeons; the Brazen Horses; the Winged Lion; the Bucentaur; all that the artists of Venice did to make her beautiful, her ambassadors to make her wise, her secret tribunals to make her terrible; memories of these things must come thronging upon the mind at the mere mention of her spell-like name. Now, with these pictures glowing vividly before you, wrench the mind away with sudden effort to the dreary plains of Pannonia. Think of the moody Tartar, sitting in his log-hut, surrounded by his barbarous guests, of Zercon gabbling his uncouth mixture of Hunnish and Latin, of Onéges's bath-man, and Kreka's wool-work, and the reed-candles in the village of Bleda's widow, and say if cause and effect were ever more strangely mated in history than the rude and brutal might of Attila with the stately and gorgeous and subtle Republic of Venice.

Venice,
'Europe's
bulwark
'gainst the
Ottomite.'

One more consideration is suggested to us by that which was the noblest part of the work of Venice, the struggle which she maintained for centuries, really on behalf of all Europe, against the Turk. Attila's power was soon to pass away, but in the ages that were to come, another Turanian race was to arise, as brutal as the Huns, but with their fierceness sharp-pointed and hardened into a far more fearful weapon of offence by the fanaticism of Islam. These descendants of the kinsfolk of

Attila were the Ottomans, and but for the barrier which, like their own *murazzi* against the waves, the Venetians interposed against the Ottomans, it is scarcely too much to say that half Europe would have undergone the misery of subjection to the organised anarchy of the Turkish Pachas. The Tartar Attila, when he gave up Aquileia and her neighbour cities to the tender mercies of his myrmidons, little thought that he was but the instrument in an unseen Hand for hammering out the shield which should one day defend Europe from Tartar robbers such as he was. The Turanian poison secreted the future antidote to itself, and the name of that antidote was Venice.

BOOK II.
CH. 4.

452.

Our narrative returns for a little space to the Pannonian home of Attila. Before the winter of 452 he had probably marched back thither with all his army. Jornandes tells us that he soon repented of his inactivity, as if it were a crime, and sent one of his usual blustering messages to Marcian, threatening to lay waste the provinces of the East unless the money promised by Theodosius were immediately paid. Notwithstanding this message, however, he really had his eyes fixed on Gaul, and burned to avenge his former defeat upon the Visigoths. The Alans, that kindred tribe now encamped on the southern bank of the Loire, seemed again to hold out some hope of facilitating his invasion. King Thorismund, however, detected the subtle schemes of Attila with equal subtlety, moved speedily towards the country of the Alans, whom

Alleged
Gaulish
campaign
of Attila.
453.

BOOK II. he either crushed or conciliated, then met the
 CH. 4. Hunnish king in arms once more upon the Catalaunian plains, and again compelled him to fly defeated to his own land. 'So did the famous Attila, the lord of many victories, in seeking to overturn the glory of his conqueror, and to wipe out the memory of his own disgrace, bring on himself double disaster, and return inglorious home.'

Disbelieved
 by his-
 torians.

By the unanimous consent of historians, this second defeat of Attila by the Visigoths is banished from the historical domain. The silence of all contemporary chroniclers, the strange coincidence as to the site of the battle, the obvious interest of the patriotic Goth to give his countrymen one victory over the Hun, of which neither Roman nor Frank could share the credit: these are the arguments upon which the negative judgment of historians is based, and they are perhaps sufficient for their purpose. It may be remarked, however, that the events assigned by the chroniclers to the year 453 do not seem absolutely to preclude the possibility of a Gaulish campaign, and that it is somewhat unsafe to argue against positive testimony from the mere silence even of far more exhaustive narrators than the annalists of the fifth century.

For the next scene, however, we have far more trustworthy authority, for here the words of Jordanes—'ut Priscus refert'—assure us that we have again, though at second-hand, the safe guidance of our old friend the Byzantine ambassador.

It was in the year 453, the year that followed

his Italian campaign, that Attila took to himself, in addition to all his other wives, and, as we have seen, his harem was an extensive one, the very beautiful damsel, Ildico. At the wedding-feast he relaxed his usual saturnine demeanour, drank copiously, and gave way to abundant merriment. Then when the guests were departed, he mounted the flight of steps that led up to his couch, placed high in the banqueting hall¹, and there lay down to sleep the heavy sleep of a reveller. He had long been subject to fits of violent bleeding at the nose, and this night he was attacked by one of them. But lying as he was upon his back in his deep and drunken slumber, the blood could not find its usual exit, but passed down his throat and choked him. The day dawned, the sun rose high in the heavens, the afternoon was far spent, and no sign was made from the nuptial chamber of the king. Then at length his servants, suspecting something wrong, after uttering loud shouts, battered in the door and entered. They found him lying dead, with no sign of a wound upon his body, the blood streaming from his mouth, and Ildico, with downcast face, silently weeping behind her veil. Such a death would, of course, excite some suspicion—suspicion which one of the Eastern chroniclers² expanded into certainty—of the guilt

BOOK II.
CH. 4.

453.

Marriage
with Ildico,

and death
of Attila.

¹ See Priscus's description quoted in the second chapter.

² Marcellinus says 'Attila, king of the Huns, despoiler of the provinces of Europe, is [at the instigation of Aetius] stabbed in

BOOK II. of Ildico, who was probably regarded as the Jael
 CH. 4. by whose hand this new and more terrible Sisera

453. had fallen. It is more probable, however, that the cause assigned by Jornandes, apparently on the authority of Priscus, is the true one, and that the mighty king died, as he says, a drunkard's death.

Marcian's dream.

It seems to be a well-attested fact, and is a curious incidental evidence of the weight with which the thought of Attila lay upon the minds even of brave men, that on the same night in which he died the stout-hearted Emperor of the East, Marcian, who had gone to sleep anxious and distressed at the prospect of a Hunnish invasion, had a dream in which he saw the bow of Attila broken. When he awoke he accepted the omen that the Huns, whose chief weapon was the bow, were to be no longer formidable to the Empire.

Attila's obsequies.

In proportion to the hope of other nations was the grief of Attila's own people when they found that their hero was taken from them. According to their savage custom they gashed their faces with deep wounds¹, in order that so great a warrior might be honoured by the flowing, not of womanish tears, but of manly blood. Then in the middle of the vast Hungarian plain they erected a lofty tent with silken curtains, under which the corpse of the

the night by the hand and dagger of a woman. Some, however, relate that he lost his life by a hemorrhage ('sanguinis re-jectione').

¹ Compare the lines of Claudian quoted at the beginning of the second book.

great chieftain was laid. A chosen band of horse-BOOK II.
men careered round and round the tent, like the CH. 4.
performers in the Circensian games of the Romans, 453.
and as they went through their mazy evolutions they
chanted a wild strain, rehearsing the high descent
and great deeds of the departed. What the form
of these Hunnish songs may have been, it is impos-
sible to conjecture; but the thoughts, or at least
some of the chief thoughts, have been preserved
to us by Jornandes, and may perhaps, without un-
fitness, be clothed in metre, for in truth his prose
here becomes almost metrical.

THE DIRGE OF ATTLA.

Mightiest of the Royal Huns¹,
Son of Mundzuk, Attila!
Leader of Earth's bravest ones,
Son of Mundzuk, Attila!
Power was his, unknown before.
German-Land and Scythia bore,
Both, his yoke. His terror flew
Either Roman Empery through.
O'er their smoking towns we bore him,
Till, to save the rest, before him,
Humbly both the Caesars prayed.
His wrath was soothed, he sheathed his blade.

¹ As this translation is somewhat paraphrastic the original is subjoined. 'Præcipuus Hunnorum Rex Attila, patre genitus Mundzucco, fortissimarum gentium dominus, qui inauditâ ante se potentiâ solus Scythica et Germanica regna possedit, necnon utraque Romani orbis Imperia captis civitatibus terruit, et ne prædæ reliquæ subderentur, placatus precibus, annum vectigal accepit. Cumque hæc omnia proventu felicitatis egerit, non vulnere hostium, non fraude suorum, sed gente incolumi, inter gaudia lætus, sine sensu doloris occubuit. Quis ergo hunc dicat exitum, quem nullus aestimat vindicandum.'

BOOK II.

CH. 4.

453.

Slave-like¹ at his feet they laid
Tribute, as their master bade,
The son of Mundzuk, Attila.

At the height of human power
Stood the chieftain, Attila,
All had prospered till that hour
That was wrought by Attila.
He fell not by the foeman's brand,
He felt no dark assassin's hand.
All his landsmen, far and wide,
Were safe from fear on every side.
In the midst of thy delight,
'Mid the joys of Wine and Night
Painless, thou hast taken flight
From thy brethren, Attila!

Shouldest thou thus have ended life,
With no pledge of future strife?
Thou art dead: in vain we seek
Foe on whom revenge to wreak
For thy life-blood, Attila!

The Inter-
ment.

When the wild dirge was ended, the great funeral-feast, which they call the *Strava*², was prepared, and the same warriors who but a few days before had been emptying great goblets of wine in honour of the marriage of Attila, now with the same outward semblance of jollity, celebrated

¹ This thought is taken from Attila's message to Theodosius by Orestes, quoted in the Second Chapter.

² There is some doubt whether the word *Strava* does not mean the heap of arms and trophies of war which was sometimes raised over the body of a dead warrior; but here the emphasis laid on the obscurity of the burial-place seems to negative that interpretation. Ducange (*Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*) seems on other grounds to prefer the banquet-interpretation.

his death. Even while the feast was proceeding, the dead body was being secretly consigned to the earth. It was enclosed in three coffins; the first of gold, the second of silver, the third of iron, to typify the wealth with which he had enriched his kingdom, and the weapons wherewith he had won it. Arms won from valiant foes, quivers studded with gems, and many another royal trinket, were buried with him. Then, as in the case of Alaric, in order to elude the avarice of future generations and keep the place of his burial secret for ever, the workmen, probably captives, who had been engaged in the task of his sepulture, were immediately put to death.

BOOK II.
CH. 4.
453.

As far as we know, the grave of Attila keeps its secret to this day. But his deeds had made an indelible mark on the imagination of three races of men—the Latin peoples, the Germans, and the Scandinavians; and in the ages of darkness which were to follow, a new and strangely-altered Attila, if we should not rather say three Attilas, rose as it were from his mysterious Pannonian tomb, gathered around themselves all kinds of weird traditions, and hovered ghostlike before the fascinated eyes of the Middle Ages. To trace the growth of this Attila-legend, however interesting the work might be as an illustration of the myth-creating faculty of half-civilized nations, is no part of our present purpose. Moreover, the task has been so well performed by M. Amedée Thierry in the last section of his *Histoire d'Attila*, that little remains for any

The
Attila of
Legend.

BOOK II. later inquirer but simply to copy from him. It
 CH. 4. will be sufficient therefore to note as briefly as possible the chief characteristics of the different versions of the legend.

Latin
 Traditions. 1. The traditions of the Latin races, preserved and elaborated by ecclesiastics, naturally concerned themselves with the religious, or rather irreligious, aspect of his character. To them he is, therefore, the great Persecutor of the Fifth Century, the murderer of the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne, but above all, he is the *Flagellum Dei*, the scourge of God, divinely permitted to set forth on his devastating career for the punishment of a world that was lying in wickedness. This title, 'Flagellum Dei,' occurs with most wearisome frequency in the mediæval stories about Attila; and wheresoever we meet with it, we have a sure indication that we are off the ground of contemporaneous and authentic history, and have entered the cloud-land of ecclesiastical mythology. Later and wilder developments in this direction, attributed to him the title of 'grandson of Nimrod, nurtured in Engedi, by the grace of God King of Huns, Goths, Danes, and Medes, the terror of the world.' There may have been a tendency, as Mr. Herbert thinks, to identify him with the Anti-Christ of the Scriptures, but this is not proved, and is scarcely in accordance with the theological idea of Anti-Christ, who is generally placed in the future or in the present rather than in the past.

2. Very unlike the semi-Satanic Attila of eccle-

siastical legend is the Teuton's representative of BOOK 11.
the same personage, the Etzel of the Niebelungen CH. 4.
Lied. In the five or six centuries which elapsed Teutonic Traditions.
between the fall of the Hunnish monarchy and the The Niebelungen Lied.
writing down of this poem, the German seems to
have forgotten almost everything about his mighty
lord and foe, except that he dwelt by the Danube,
that there was glorious feasting in his palace, and
that he had relations both in peace and war with
the Burgundians and the Franks. Hence in the
Niebelungen Lied all that is distinctive in Attila's
character disappears. He marries the Burgundian
princess Kriemhilde, the widow of Siegfried, and at
her request invites her kindred, the Niebelungs,
to visit him in Hunland. There, good-nature and
hospitality are his chief characteristics; he would
fain spend all day in hunting and all night at the
banquet; he is emphatically the commonplace
personage of the story. True, it is in his hall that
the terrible fight is waged for a long summer day
between the Niebelungs and the Huns, till the
floor is slippery with the blood of slaughtered
heroes. But this is not his doing, but the doing of
his wife, that terrible figure, the Clytemnestra or
the Electra of the German tragedy, 'reaping the
due of hoarded vengeance' for the murder of her
girlhood's husband Siegfried. Her revenge and
Hagen's hardness, and the knightly loyalty of
Rudiger only serve to throw the genially rapid
king of the Huns yet further into the background.
This round and rubicund figure, all benevolence

BOOK II. and hospitality, is assuredly not the thunder-
 CH. 4. brooding, sallow, silent Attila of history.

Scandinavian
 Tradition.

Saga of the
 Niblunga.

3. The Scandinavian Atli, the husband of Gudruna, is a much better copy of the original. He himself is the cause of the death of the Niblung heroes, he plots and diplomatises and kills in order to recover the buried treasure of Sigurd, just as the real Attila moved heaven and earth for the recovery of Honoria's dowry or the chalices of Sirmium. Above all, the final scene in which he, with a certain grand calmness discusses, with the wife who has murdered him, the reason of her crime and appeals to her generosity to grant him a noble funeral, is not at all unlike what Attila might have said to Ildico, if the suspicion of the Byzantine courtiers had been correct, that he had met his death at her hand.

That the King of the Huns should be mentioned at all, far more that he should play so large a part in the national epic of the far-distant Iceland, is a strange fact, and suggests two interesting explanations. First: the statement of the Western ambassadors to Priscus that Attila had penetrated even to the isles of the Ocean may have been more nearly true than one is disposed, at first, to think possible, and he may have really annexed Norway and Sweden (the 'island of Scanzia,' as Jornandes calls it) to his dominions. Second: throughout the early Middle Ages there was probably an extensive reciprocal influence between the literature of the countries of Western Europe, especially

a borrowing of plots and scenery and characters by the minstrels of various nations from one another, and it may have been thus that the fiction of the King of the Huns and his murdered guests travelled from the Danube to the North Sea. It seems a paradox, yet it is probably true that the thought of Austria had more chance of blending with the thought of Iceland in the days of the Skald and the Minnesingers than in the days of the Railroad and the Telegraph.

Another line of inventions rather than of traditions must be referred to, only to reject them as containing no valuable element for the historian or the archaeologist. The Magyars, a race of Turanian origin, and therefore bound by some distant ties of kindred to the Huns, entered Europe at the close of the 9th century, and established themselves in that country of Dacia which has since been known as Hungary. As they slowly put off the habits of a mere band of marauders, as they became civilised and Christian, and as they thus awoke to historical consciousness, like a man sprung from the people who has risen to riches and honour, they looked about them for a pedigree. Such a pedigree was found for them by their ecclesiastics in an imagined descent from Attila, 'Flagellum Dei'. So, from the 11th to the 15th century a series of Magyar chroniclers, Simon

BOOK II.
CH. 4.

Hungarian
imagina-
tions about
Attila,
quite value-
less for
History.

¹ Little of course did they then foresee that their own noble deeds would furnish them with a far prouder escutcheon than any that even a genuine affinity to the great Marauder could bestow upon them.



BOOK 11. Keza, Thurocz, Nicolaus Olahus, and others, made
 CH. 4. it their task to glorify the nation of the Hungarians by writing out the great deeds of Attila. There is no sufficient evidence that they were recording that which had been truly handed down, however vaguely, from their ancestors. On the contrary, there is everything to show that they were, as they supposed, embellishing, and certainly expanding the literary history of Attila by imaginations of their own. Inventions of this kind are valuable neither as fact nor as legend. They no more truly illustrate the history of Attila than the Book of Mormon illustrates the history of the Jews; and they probably reflect no more light on the genuine traditions of the Asiatic and heathen Magyars than is thrown by the 'Mort d'Arthur' on the thoughts of British minds in the days of Cassivelaunus and Boadicea. They are neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill, and should be sternly disregarded by the historian who wishes to keep before his mind's eye the true lineaments of the great Hunnish warrior.

Resem-
 blance
 between
 Attila and
 Napoleon.

We return for a moment, in conclusion, to the true historic Attila, whose portrait, as painted by Priscus and Jornandes, has been placed, it may be with too great fulness of detail, before the reader. It is impossible not to be struck by a certain resemblance both in his character and in his career to those of the latest world-conqueror, Napoleon. Sometimes the very words used to describe the one seem as if they glanced off and

hit the other. Thus a recent German historian¹ in BOOK II.
an eloquent passage, contrasting the Hun and his CH. 4.
great Roman antagonist, Aetius, says—

‘Conspicuous above the crowd the two claimants to the lordship of the world stood over against one another. Attila in his wild dream of building up a universal empire in the space of one generation : opposite to him the General of that Power which, in the course of a thousand years, had extended its dominions over three Continents, and was not disposed to relinquish them without a struggle. But in truth, the idea of a world-empire of the Huns had passed out of the sphere of practical politics even before the battle on the Catalaunian plains. Far and wide Attila enslaved the nations, but the more the mass of his subjects grew and grew, the more certain they were, in time, to burst the fetters which the hand of one single warrior, however mighty, had bound around them. With Attila’s death at latest his empire must fall in ruins, whether he won or lost on the battle-field by Troyes. But the Roman would still stand, so long as its generals had the will and the power to hold it together.’

Do we not seem to hear in these words a description of Napoleon’s position, sublime but precarious, when he was at the zenith of his glory ? As the Hun led Scythia and Germany against Gaul, so the Corsican led Gaul and

¹ Professor Binding, *Geschichte des Burgundisch-Romanischen Königreichs*, p. 44.

BOOK II. Germany against Scythia in the fatal campaign
CH. 4. of 1812. The Kings of Saxony and Bavaria were
his Ardaric and Walamir ; Moscow his Orleans ;
Leipsic his 'Campus Mauriacensis.' He won his
Honoraria from an 'Emperor of the Romans,'
prouder and of longer lineage than Valentinian.
Like Attila, he destroyed far more than he could
rebuild ; his empire, like Attila's, lasted less than
two decades of years ; but, unlike Attila, he out-
lived his own prosperity. Of course, even greater
than any such resemblance are the differences
between the uncultured intellect of the Tartar
chieftain, and the highly-developed brain of the
great Italian-Frenchman who played with battal-
ions as with chessmen, who thought out the new
Paris, who desired 'to go down to posterity with
his code in his hand.' But the insatiable pride,
the arrogance which beat down the holders of
ancient thrones and trampled them like the dust
beneath their feet, the wide-stretching schemes of
empire, the haste which forbade their conquests to
endure, the wonderful ascendancy over men which
made the squalid Hun the instrument of the one,
and the Jacobin of the other, and above all, the
terror which the mere sound of their names brought
to fair cities and widely-scattered races of men,—
in all these points no one so well as Napoleon
explains to us the character and career of Attila.

NOTE B. ON THE DATE OF THE FOUNDATION OF
VENICE.

THE assertion in the text, that the story of Venice having NOTE B.
been founded by fugitives at the time of Attila's invasion rests on mere tradition, may surprise some readers. Others, with the popular histories of Venice in their hands, may think that an earlier date ought to have been assigned to that event. Daru (*Histoire de Venise*, i. 27), after asserting that the invasions of *Alaric* sent some fugitives across the *Lagunes* (a very probable hypothesis, though one entirely unsupported by proof), goes on to state that twenty-four houses on the *Rialto* having been destroyed by fire, a church to St. James was dedicated there in the year 421. 'La ville de Padoue y envoya des magistrats annuels, avec le titre de Consuls. On trouve dans un vieux manuscrit, le plus ancien monument de l'histoire de Venise; c'est un décret du sénat de Padoue, sous la date de 421, qui ordonne la construction d'une ville à Rialte, pour y rassembler, en une seule communauté, les habitants répandus sur les îles environnantes, afin qu'ils puissent y tenir une flotte armée, parcourir la mer avec plus de sûreté, et se défendre avec plus d'avantage dans leur asyle. Tels furent les commencements de la superbe Venise.'

This seems circumstantial enough, and has been copied in good faith by the writers of popular manuals who have to deal with the early history of Venice, though they are evidently puzzled by finding the foundation of the city thus assigned to the year 421, thirty-one years, as they well knew, before the invasion of Attila, which they have also to represent to their readers as the main cause of the settlement of Venice.

The fact is, and it cannot be stated too clearly in order to relieve this useful class of writers from an unnecessary

NOTE B. dilemma, that the whole story of the foundation of the city or the building of the Church of St. James in 421, is a mere fable (the result of ignorance rather than of dishonesty), and that the alleged 'Decree of the Senate of Padua,' is as valuable a contribution to history as the forgeries of Ireland or Chatterton, but no more so.

I. The earliest historian of Venice is *Andrea Dandolo*, who was born in 1307, was Doge from 1343 to 1354, and was the immediate predecessor of Marino Faliero. His history (*Chronicon Venetum*, in the twelfth volume of Muratori) is very uncritical, but in his account of the events of the fifth century he builds a good deal on Jornandes and the *Historia Miscella*, though also to some extent on the Hungarian Romancers (historians they cannot be called) who wrote about Attila. He appears to be under the impression that Attila began to reign over the Huns about 415, since he places his accession before the election of Pope Zosimus in 417; and he describes¹ a battle which took place between him and Macrinus, 'Tetrarch of Pannonia, Dalmatia, Macedonia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia,' in which 40,000 Huns were slain, but Macrinus also fell, and the Roman army was routed. The title attributed to Macrinus is sufficient to show that Dandolo is here working with absolutely unhistorical materials.

He then proceeds in the next part to relate how the chiefs and people of the cities of Venetia, exhausted by the incursions of the Barbarians, decided to construct certain maritime cities of refuge. 'First of all, Gallianus de Fontana, Simeon de Glauconibus, and Antonius Calvus de Limianis, Consuls of Patavium (Padua), not unmindful of the past invasion, went to the maritime regions, and there near the mouth of the river Realdis, having found an island suitable for their purposes, laid the foundations of the city of Rivoaltus on the 25th of March in the year of our Lord 421.' The fire (issuing from the house of a Greek ship-master named Eutinopus), by which twenty-four mansions were consumed, and the building of a church dedicated to St.

¹ Book v, chap. 1, part 9.

James are then recorded. This is the first and best authority for the statement quoted above from Daru, and it is hardly necessary to say that it has not the slightest claim to be regarded as authentic history. The *three* Consuls of Padua, with such names as 'de Fontana,' 'de Glauconibus,' and 'de Limianis,' in the early part of the fifth century, are alone quite enough to condemn it. NOTE B.

But Dandolo, though he was quite at fault as to the date of the commencement of Attila's reign, knew, with something like accuracy, the date of the fall of Aquileia, which he puts about 454. He knew very little however as to the circumstances of that disaster. We have the story of the storks, of course, and of the matron Digna, who threw herself headlong into the Natiso. But he says that after 9000 of Attila's men and 2000 of the citizens of Aquileia had been slain, the latter, 'being no longer able to resist so great a multitude, put statues as sentinels on the walls, and thus, by distracting Attila's attention, almost all escaped to Grado.' Soon after, however, Attila let fly his hawk, which settled on the hand of one of the statues. The boldness of the bird and the immobility of the man revealed the trick to Attila, and in his anger he rased the city to the ground. (Book v, chap. 5.) Attila then presses on to Concordia, whose inhabitants fly to Caprulae (Caorle), to Altino, whose inhabitants colonise Torcello and the five neighbouring islands, and name them after the six gates of their city, and lastly to Padua (which Dandolo here calls by its modern name and not Patavium). 'The king of the city of Padua sent his queen with his sons, their wives and little ones, and all his treasure to Rialto and Malamocco. Attila attacked the city, was first defeated, then he gained a victory and destroyed Padua.' Again we have here a narrative which is absolutely unhistorical, and which, even as an invention, must have belonged to a period long subsequent to the fifth century.

II. *Andrea Nogier*, a Venetian noble, who lived about 1500, is the reputed author of a History of Venice, which is printed in the twenty-third volume of Muratori. It would be an insult to Dandolo to put Nogier's work for a

NOTE B. moment in comparison with his. Muratori truly says that it is full of fables and anachronisms in the early part, and that the man who can read it through must have plenty of spare time on his hands. It is only worth noticing here as showing the growth of the legend about the foundation in 421 and its utter historic worthlessness.

Attila, according to this account, was the grandson of a King of Hungary named Osdrubald. His invasion of Italy is placed in the years 420-428. His sieges of Aquileia, Concordia, Altino, and Pafagonia (Padua) are described at great length, and with no regard to truth. The name of the King of Padua is Janus, his Queen is 'Andriana ovvero Vitaliana.' The siege of Padua is said to have lasted seven years. In the second year of Attila's invasion, i.e. 421, 'on the 15th of March, which was a Saturday, it was determined by the Nobles and Tribunes of the kingdom of Padua, to build a city on the island of Rivoalto. And three Consuls were set over this work whose names were Julius Falier, Thomas Candianus, and Cosmas Paulus.' By some mistake the author represents the design to build the city as resolved upon on the 15th of March, though the first stone is laid three days earlier on the 12th of March 421, 'in which year¹, month, and day the arrangement of the heavens was by the Divine will and ordering of such favourable aspect as verily to promise that the aforesaid city should be noble and powerful, as is seen at this day².'

Then follows a good deal more of atrociously disjointed history, in which for instance Totila (who really reigned from 541 to 552) is represented as invading Italy and persecuting the Christians in 440. Soon after, the mendacious scribe, who must surely be laughing at his readers, says, 'From 442 to 648 the History of Venice is lost, and none of it can be written.' There need not have been any blank spaces in a history written on such principles.

III. *Marino Sanuto* (in the twenty-second volume of Muratori), who flourished towards the end of the fifteenth century, and was still alive in the year 1522, admits that there are various opinions about the time of the *principio* of Venice,

¹ Millesimo (P).

² Muratori, xxiii, 925-932.

one author putting 'it in the year 456 [453], so indicating the time in which, at the death of Attila, reigned Pope Leo I, Marcian, Gaiseric, Meroveus, and Valentinian Junior.' NOTE B.

'But the truth is that in the year 421, as I have said, on the 25th of March, Friday, "e ascendendo, come nell' Astrologica figura appare, gradi 25 di Cancro," was laid the first stone, as many writers tell, of the Church of S. Jacopo di Rivoalto. On which day, as Holy Scripture testifies, our first father Adam was formed at the beginning of the Creation of the World. On the same day was the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to the blessed Virgin Mary, and the Son of God was conceived in her womb. And on the same day, according to some theologians, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, was crucified by the Hebrews on Mount Calvary. So this day is a very memorable one. ('Sicchè è giorno molto memorabile¹.')

An astrological diagram is appended, to shew the aspect of the heavens at that day and hour. It is of course a great matter, from this point of view, to get for the foundation of the city a day which corresponds according to the days of the week as well as according to those of the year with the supposed day of the crucifixion. (Not however an ecclesiastical Good Friday which, according to 'L'Art de verifier les dates,' fell in 421 a week later, on the 1st April.)

IV. It is scarcely necessary to quote the passage in which *Marco Antonio Sabellico*, another great Venetian historian (who died in 1504), gives his opinion concerning 'la vera origine Veneta.' He is slightly heterodox about the year, which according to him is 422, but he is quite certain about the day. 'Almost all agree in this that on the 25th of March began the origin of this city.' And then he proceeds, like Sanuto (who perhaps copied from him), to enumerate the wonderful events which according to Scripture and tradition happened on this most auspicious day.

For all the statements which have been quoted from these four historians, it is abundantly clear that there is not the slightest true historical foundation. They are mere fancies of mediæval Venetian patriotism, which may be revered or

¹ Muratori, xxii. 405-408.

NOTE B. smiled at according to the mood of the reader, but which, having no relation to fact, should be carted away out of the domain of History with the least possible delay.

Whether the mistake under which the early Venetian historians evidently laboured as to the accession of Attila, and which led them to antedate his operations against Italy by nearly thirty years, or the astrological and ecclesiastical back-reckonings which led them up to the 25th of March, 421, as a very choice day on which their city *should have been* built, was the original cause of the error, it is not likely that we can now ascertain. Perhaps the historical error and the chronological conceit grew together and each strengthened the other.

The student however will expect, before the subject is dismissed, to hear something of that which Daru calls 'the most ancient monument of the history of Venice, the decree of the Senate of Padua under the date of 421, which orders the construction of a city at Rialto.' Daru quotes this document. It begins, 'Anno a nativitate Christi cccxxi in ultimo anno papae Innocentii primi . . . Aponencia, regno Pataviencium feliciter et copiose florenti, regentibus rempublicam Galiano de Fontana, Simeone de Glausonibus, et Antonio Calvo dominis consulibus . . . decretum est . . . aedificari urbem circa Rivoaltum, etc.' and he concludes 'Nam Gothorum multitudinem et instantiam verebantur et recordabantur quod anno Christi cccxxiii [sic] ipsi Gothi cum rege eorum Alarico venerant in Italiam, et ipsam provinciam igne et ferro vastatam reliquerant et ad urbem processerunt eam spoliantes.'

According to Daru 'Le bibliographe ajoute "Reliquum legere non potui."' It was really not worth while his reading so far. Every scholar must at once perceive that this document, the so-called 'most ancient monument of the history of Venice,' is an absurd and clumsy fabrication. The misdating of Alaric's invasion by at least three years is a comparatively trifling error. The use of the date 'Anno Christi,' in the year 421, a century before Dionysius Exiguus, and the ridiculously unclassical names of the three consuls of Padua, at once stamp the document as a forgery, and give one a very low idea of

the attainments of the historian who could be imposed upon by it ¹. NOTE B.

The real 'most ancient monument of the history of Venice' is the celebrated letter of Cassiodorus to the Venetians in the early part of the sixth century. This letter proves that already among the Venetian islands, though very likely not precisely at the Rialto, there was collected such a population of fishermen, salt-manufacturers, and hardy mariners as those whom we find thriving there when in 697 the first Doge is elected and the continuous history of Venice commences.

¹ Endeavouring to follow up at Venice the reference which Daru gives as to this MS., I was unable to discover where it is at present. The Camaldulensian convent in whose library it was placed is, as I understood, dispersed. But I was informed that the Tomaselli collection, of which this MS. formed part, consisted chiefly of 'copie di copie di copie,' and was of extremely slight archaeological value.

BOOK III.

THE VANDAL INVASION AND THE HERULIAN MUTINY.

CHAPTER I.

EXTINCTION OF THE HUNNISH EMPIRE AND THE THEODOSIAN DYNASTY.

Authorities.

Sources :—

For the disruption of the Hunnish Empire, JORNANDES. BOOK III.
For the deaths of Aetius and Valentinian, PROSPER, whose CR. 1.
original chronicle ends with a long and eloquent paragraph
at the year 455.

With the termination of Prosper's chronicle we are introduced to a partly new set of Annalists.

VICTOR TUNNUNENSIS flourished in the sixth century. He was bishop of a place in the province of Africa, the exact situation of which is not known. He wrote a chronicle (edited by Roncalli), continuing that of Prosper down to the first year of Justin II (565). He can only be looked upon as a second-rate authority for fifth century matters, but, writing from the neighbourhood of Carthage, he may have sometimes preserved the local traditions as to the acts of the Vandal conquerors.

ANONYMUS CUSPINIANI is the uncouth designation of a

BOOK III. mysterious MS. (also edited by Roncalli), which is our
 CH. I. most valuable authority for last quarter-century of the
 Western Empire. The MS. of this chronicle is in the Imperial Library at Vienna. It was first published by a certain Joseph Cuspinianus, a scholar of the Renaissance (who died in 1529), and hence the name by which it is technically known. It begins with a mere list of names of Consuls, very fragmentary, and of no great value. With the year 378, the point where St. Jerome's Chronicle ends, 'the Anonymous of Cuspinian' becomes more valuable. He begins to insert much fuller notices of passing events, and is exceedingly precise in mentioning the day of the month on which each event occurred. It would not probably be too much to assert that at least half of the dates recorded by historians who write of the accessions and depositions of the Roman Emperors in the fifth century, are due to the Anonymus Cuspiniani. His information becomes perceptibly fuller and richer as the historical interest approaches Ravenna. From this and various other reasons it is conjectured that we have here an official record compiled at Ravenna, possibly by some Minister of the Imperial Court; and some of the scholars of Germany have gone so far as to endeavour to reconstruct from it the original 'Ravennatische Fasten.' But putting aside all minute conjectures as to its origin and preservation, there can be no doubt that we have here an exceedingly valuable and nearly, or quite, contemporary record of the events between 455 and 493. There is an unfortunate chasm in the chronicle between 403 and 455.

Besides the above-mentioned sources we derive some details from APOLLINARIUS SIDONIUS and PROCOPIUS, who will be described more fully in future chapters.

WITH dramatic suddenness the stage after the death of Attila is cleared of all the chief actors, and fresh performers come upon the scene, some of whom occupy it for the following twenty years. Before tracing the character and following the

fortunes of the Vandal invaders of Rome, let us briefly notice these changes.

BOOK III.
CH. I.

The death of Attila was followed by a dissolution of his empire, as complete and more ruinous than that which befell the Macedonian monarchy on the death of Alexander. The numerous progeny of his ill-assorted harem were not disposed to recognise any one of their number as supreme lord. Neither Ellak, the eldest son, who had sat uneasily on the edge of his chair in the paternal presence, nor Ernak, the youngest, his father's darling, and he upon whom the hopes of Attila had most confidently rested, could obtain this preeminence. There were besides, Emnedzar, Uzindur, Dinzio, and one knows not how many more uncouthly-named brethren ; in fact, as Jornandes says, ' these living memorials of the lustful disposition of Attila made a little nation themselves. All were filled with a blind desire to rule, and so between them they upset their father's kingdom. It is not the first time that a superabundance of heirs has proved more fatal to a dynasty than an absolute deficiency of them.'

454.
Dissensions
between
the sons
of Attila.

To end the quarrel, it was decided that this tribe of sons should partition between them the inheritance of their father. But the great fabric which had been upheld by the sullen might of Attila was no longer a mere aggregation of nomad clans, such as the Hunnish nation had once been. If it had still been in this rudimentary condition, it might perhaps have borne division easily. But now it

Attempted
partition
causes
discontent
among the
confeder-
ates.

BOOK III. contained whole nations of more finely fibred brain
 CH. I.
 454- than the Huns, astute statemen-kings like Ardaric, sons of the gods like the three Amal brothers who led the Ostrogoths to battle. These men and their followers had been awed into subservient alliance with the great Hun. They had elected to plunder with him rather than to be plundered by him, and they had perhaps found their account in doing so. But not for that were they going to be partitioned like slaves among these loutish lads, the sons of Attila's concubines, men not one of whom possessed a tithe of their father's genius, and who, when they had thus broken up his empire into fragments, would be singly but petty princelings, each of far less importance than many of their own vassals. Should the noble nation of the Ostrogoths lose the unity which it had possessed for centuries, and be allotted part to Ellak and part to Ernak? Should the Gepidae be distributed like agricultural slaves, so many to Emnedzar, and so many to Uzindur? That was not Germania's understanding of the nature of her alliance with Scythia, as it would not have been the King of Saxony's or the King of Bavaria's understanding of the tie which bound him to Napoleon. Ardaric, king of the Gepidae, lately the chosen confidant of Attila, now stepped forth to denounce this scheme of partition, and to uphold Teutonic independence against Attila's successors. The battle was joined near the river Netad, a stream in Pannonia which modern geographers have not identified, but which

Battle of
the Netad.

was probably situated in that part of Hungary which is west of the Danube. 'There,' says Jordanes¹, whose Gothic heart seems to beat faster beneath his churchman's frock whenever he has a bloody battle to describe,—'There did all the various nations whom Attila had kept under his dominion meet and look one another in the face. Kingdoms and peoples are divided against one another, and out of one body divers limbs are made, no longer governed by one impulse, but animated by mutual rage, having lost their presiding head. These were those most mighty nations which had never found their peers in the world if they had not been sundered the one from the other, and gashed one another with mutual wounds. I trow it was a marvellous sight to look upon. There should you have seen the Gothic warrior raging with his broad sword, the Gepid breaking all the javelins of the foe even at the cost of his own wounds; the Sueve pressing on with nimble foot; the Hun covering his advance with a cloud of arrows; the Alan drawing up his heavy-armed troops; the Herul his lighter companies, in battle array.' We are not distinctly told what was the share of the Ostrogoths in this great encounter, and we may reasonably doubt whether all the German tribes were arranged on one side and all the Tartars on the other with such precision as a modern ethnologist would have used in an ideal battle of the nationalities. But the result

BOOK III.
CH. I.

454.

¹ De Rebus Geticis, cap. I.

BOOK III. is not doubtful. After many desperate charges,
 CH. I. Victory, which they scarcely hoped for, sat upon
 454. the standards of the Gepidae. Thirty thousand of
 the Huns and their confederates lay dead upon the
 field, among them Ellak, Attila's firstborn, 'by
 such a glorious death that it would have done his
 father's heart good to witness it.' The rest of his
 nation fled away across the Dacian plains, and
 over the Carpathian mountains to those wide
 steppes of Southern Russia, in which at the com-
 mencement of our history we saw the three Gothic
 nations taking up their abode. Ernak, Attila's
 darling, ruled tranquilly under Roman protection
 in the district between the lower Danube and the
 Black Sea, which we now call the Dobrudscha,
 and which was then 'the lesser Scythia.' Others
 of his family maintained a precarious footing
 higher up the stream, in Dacia Ripensis on the
 confines of Servia and Bulgaria. Others made a
 virtue of necessity, and entering 'Romania' frankly
 avowed themselves subjects and servants of the
 Eastern Caesar, towards whom they had lately
 shown themselves such contumelious foes. There
 is nothing in the after-history of these fragments
 of the nation with which any one need concern him-
 self. The Hunnish empire is from this time forward
 mere drift-wood on its way to inevitable oblivion.

Settlement
 of Teutonic
 nations in
 Hun-land.

What is more interesting for us, as affecting the
 fortunes of the dwellers in Italy during the succeed-
 ing century, is the allotment of the dominions of
 Attila among the Teutonic tribes who had cast

off the Hunnish yoke. Dacia, that part of Hungary BOOK III.
which lies east and north of the Danube, and CH. I.
which had been the heart of Attila's domains, fell 454.
to the lot of the Gepidae, under the wise and
victorious Ardaric. Pannonia, that is the western
portion of Hungary, with Sclavonia, and parts of
Croatia, Styria and Lower Austria, was ruled over
by the three Amal-descended kings of the Ostro-
goths. What barbarous tribe took possession of
Noricum in the general anarchy does not appear to
be clearly stated, but there is some reason to think
that part of it at least was occupied by the Heruli,
and that the south-eastern portion, Carinthia and
Carniola, received those Sclavonic settlers (coming
originally in the triumphant train of Attila) whom,
to increase the perplexity of the politicians of
Vienna, it still retains.

The death of Attila and the disruption of his Aetius no
longer
necessary
to Valen-
tinian.
empire removed the counterpoise which alone had
for many years enabled the Western Emperor to
bear the weight of the services of Aetius. It is
true that quite recently vows of mutual friendship
had been publicly exchanged and sealed with the
rites of religion between these two men, the
nominal and the real rulers of Italy. It is true
that a solemn compact had been entered into for
the marriage of the son of Aetius¹ with the
daughter of Valentinian, and thus, as the Em-
peror had no son, a safe path seemed to be indi-

¹ Probably Gaudentius, so named after his paternal grandfather.
But there was at least one other son, Carpilio (see p. 175, n. 1).

BOOK III. cated in the future by which the ambition of the
 CH. 1. general might be gratified, yet the claims of the

454

Theodosian line not sacrificed. All this might be, but nothing could avail against the persuasion which had rapidly insinuated itself into the Emperor's mind that the minister, so useful and so burdensome, was now no longer needed. Just as Honorius forty-six years before had planned the ruin of Stilicho, so now (454) did the nephew of Honorius plot the murder of the only Roman general who was worthy to rival Stilicho's renown. The part which was then played by Olympius was now played by the Eunuch Heraclius. Whether, as some chroniclers say, the Eunuch filled his master's mind with suspicions as to the revolutionary designs of Aetius, or whether, as others, the Emperor first resolved on the murder of his general, and secured the grand chamberlain's assistance, does not greatly signify. As planet attracts planet and is itself attracted by it, so villain works on villain, and is worked upon by him, when a great crime, profitable to both, presents itself as possible.

Murder of
 Aetius.

The Emperor enticed Aetius into his palace without an escort. Possibly the pretext was some further conversation as to the marriage treaty between their children. Possibly when the general had entered the presence-chamber, his master announced that he must consider this contract as at an end, for we are told that Aetius was urging with uncourtly warmth the pretensions of his son,

when he was suddenly stabbed by the Emperor himself. The swords of the by-standers finished the work with unnecessary circumstances of cruelty, and the chief friends of the murdered minister having been on one pretence or other allured singly into the palace, were all slain in like manner. Among them was his most intimate friend, Boetius, the Praetorian Prefect, and the grandfather, probably, of the celebrated author of the 'Consolations of Philosophy.'

BOOK III.
CH. I.
454.

In narrating this event, the Count Marcellinus (writing probably about half a century after it had occurred) rises above his usual level as a mere chronicler, and remarks, 'With Aetius fell the whole Hesperian realm, nor has it hitherto been able to raise itself up again.' We seem, in the faded chronicle, to read almost the very words of Shakespeare—

'O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourished over us.'

Another historian¹ tells us that immediately after the murder, 'a certain Roman uttered an epigram, which made no small reputation for its author. The Emperor asked him if in his opinion the death of Aetius was a good deed to have accomplished. Whereupon he replied, "Whether it was a good deed, most noble Emperor, or something quite other than a good deed, I am scarcely able to

¹ Procopius (*De Bello Vandalico*, i. 4).

BOOK III. say. One thing, however, I do know, that you
 CH. 1. have chopped off your right hand with your left.”

454. A contemporary author, the Gaulish poet Apollinaris Sidonius, in some verses written a year or two after the event, alludes in passing to the time when

‘The Thing, scarce Man, Placidia’s fatuous son
 Butchered Aetius¹’

So that this deed at least had not to wait for a late posterity to be judged according to its desert.

It was probably towards the end of 454 that the murder of Aetius was perpetrated, and the scene of the crime was Rome, which for ten years previously seems to have been the chief residence of the Emperor, though Ravenna was occasionally visited by him.

455. In the middle of the succeeding March the Emperor rode out of the city one day to the Campus Martius. He halted by two laurel bushes in a pleasant avenue, and there, surrounded by his court and his guards, was intently watching the games of the athletes². Suddenly two soldiers of barbarian origin, named Optila and Traustila, rushed upon him and stabbed him. The Eunuch

Valentinian assassinated.

¹ ‘Aetium Placidus mactavit semivir amens’ (Panegyric of Avitus, 359).

² This seems to be the meaning of the very elliptical words of Prosper, ‘egressum extra Urbem principem et ludo gestationis intentum.’ Marcellinus, Cassiodorus, and others add ‘in Campo Martio.’ The Augustan MS. of Prosper supplies ‘ad duas Lauros,’ a little detail which is also contained in the Paschal Chronicle.

Heraclius, the confidant who had planned the death of Aetius, was also slain. No other blood seems to have been shed, and apparently it must be taken as an evidence how low the Emperor had fallen in the esteem of his subjects, that in all that courtly retinue, and in all that surrounding army, not a hand stirred to avenge his death. The murderers were well known as henchmen of Aetius, who, moved partly by resentment at his fate, and partly, no doubt, by chagrin at the interruption of their own career of promotion, had for months been dogging the steps of the heedless Emperor with this black design in their hearts.

Valentinian III left no son, and thus the Imperial line of Theodosius became extinct, after it had held the Eastern throne seventy-four years (379-453), and the Western sixty-one (394-455). The choice of the people and army fell on Petronius Maximus, an elderly senator, who assumed the purple with every prospect of a wise and perhaps even a successful reign.

The new Emperor was apparently related to Probus, the eminent Roman, whose two sons were made consuls in the same year (395) amid the high-flown panegyrics of Claudian. He is said to have been also grandson of that usurping Emperor Maximus, who was taken prisoner by the soldiers of Theodosius at the third milestone from Aquileia. But his own career as a member of the civil hierarchy had been so much more than merely respectable, that it seems impossible to deny to him

BOOK III.
Ch. I.
455.

Elevation
and pre-
vious career
of Maxi-
mus.

BOOK III. the possession of some ability, and even of some
 CH. 1.

reputation for virtue, as Roman virtue went in those days. At the age¹ of nineteen he was admitted into the Imperial Council as tribune and notary²; then Count of the Sacred Largesses, and then Prefect of Rome, all before he had attained his twenty-fifth year. When he was in this last capacity, the Emperor Honorius, at the request of the senate and people, erected a statue to his honour in the great Forum of Trajan. Consul at the age of thirty-eight, Prefect of Italy from the age of forty-four to forty-six, again Consul at forty-eight, and again Prefect, he had attained at fifty the crowning dignity of the Patriciate. This was evidently a man whom both prince and people had delighted to honour, and from whom, now that he had reached his sixtieth year, a reign of calm and statesmanlike wisdom, and such prosperity as those evil days would admit of, might not unreasonably have been hoped for.

Short and
 unhappy
 reign of
 Maximus,

How different was the result, and how far he was from attaining, much more from bestowing, happiness during the seventy days or thereabouts that he wore the Imperial Purple, we learn from a letter addressed, some time after his death, by one³ who was himself well acquainted with the inner life of courts, to Serranus, a faithful friend, who still

¹ These facts are collected by Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*, v. 257.

² Say 'Lieutenant in the Army and Under-Secretary of State.'

³ Apollinaris Sidonius, *Ep. ii. 13*

ventured to proclaim his attachment to an un-BOOK III.
popular and fallen patron.

CH. I.

'I received your letter,' says Sidonius, 'dedicated ^{as de-} to the praises of your patron the Emperor Petronius ^{scribed by} Maximus. I think, however, that either affection ^{Sidonius.} or a determination to support a foregone conclusion has carried you away from the strict truth when you call him most happy (*felicissimus*) because he passed through the highest offices of the state and died an emperor. I can never agree with the opinion that those men should be called happy who cling to the steep and slippery summits of the State. For words cannot describe how many miseries are hourly endured in the lives of men who, like Sulla, claim to be called Felix because they have clambered over the limits of law and right assigned to the rest of their fellow-citizens. They think that supreme power must be supreme happiness, and do not perceive that they have, by the very act of grasping dominion, sold themselves to the most wearisome of all servitudes: for, as kings lord it over their fellow-men, so the anxiety to retain power lords it over kings.

'To pass by the proofs of this that might be drawn from the lives of preceding and succeeding emperors, your friend Maximus alone shall prove my maxims¹. He, though he had climbed up with stout heart into the high places of Prefect, Patrician, Consul, and had, with unsatisfied ambition,

¹ 'Solus peculiaris iste tuus *Maximus maximo* nobis ad ista documento poterit esse.' Sidonius is an inveterate punster.

BOOK III. claimed a second turn at some of these offices,
 CH. 1. nevertheless when he arrived still vigorous at the
 455. top of the imperial precipice, felt his head swim with dizziness under the diadem, and could no more endure to be master of all than he had before endured to be under a master. Then think of the popularity, the authority, the permanence of his former manner of life, and compare them with the origin, the tempestuous course, the close of his two months' sovereignty, and you will find that the least happy portion of his life was that in which he was styled *Beatissimus*.

‘So it came to pass that he who had attracted universal admiration by his well-spread table, his courtly manners, his wealth, his equipages, his library, his consular dignity, his patrimonial inheritance, his following of clients,—he who had arranged the various pursuits of his life so accurately that each hour marked on the water-clock^a brought its own allotted employment—this same man, when he had been hailed as Augustus, and with that vain show of majesty had been shut up, a virtual prisoner, within the palace walls, lamented before twilight came over the fulfilment of his ambitious hopes. Now a host of cares forbade him to indulge in his former measure of repose, he had suddenly to break off all his old rules of life, and perceived when it was too late that the business of an emperor and the ease of a senator could not go

¹ ‘Paulo amplius quam bimestris principatus.’

² Clepsydra.

together. Moreover, the worry of the present did not blind him to the calamities which were to come, for he who had trodden the round of all his other courtly dignities with tranquil step, now found himself the powerless ruler of a turbulent court, surrounded by tumults of the legionaries, tumults of the populace, tumults of the barbarian mercenaries¹; and the forebodings thus engendered were but too surely justified when the end came—an end quick, bitter, and unlooked-for, the last perfidious stroke of fortune, which had long fawned upon the man, and now suddenly turned and stung him to death as with a scorpion's tail. A man of letters, who by his talents well deserved the rank which he bore of *quaestor*, I mean Fulgentius, used to tell me that he had often heard Maximus say, when cursing the burden of empire, and regretting his old freedom from cares, 'Ah, happy Damocles! it was only for one banquet's space that you had to endure the necessity of reigning.'

Sidonius then tells in his most elaborate style the story of Damocles feasting sumptuously under the suspended sword-blade, and concludes, 'Wherefore, Sir Brother, I cannot say whether those who are on their way to Sovereign Power may be considered happy; but it is clear that those who have arrived at it are miserable.'

Let the reader store up in his mind this picture of a sorely worried Emperor vainly striving to

¹ 'Foederati.'

BOOK III. maintain his authority amid the clamours of mu-
CH. 1.

455- tinous legionaries full of fight everywhere but on the battle-field, of Roman demagogues haranguing about Regulus and Romulus, and of German *foederati* insatiable in their claims for donative and land. For this picture, or something like it, will probably suit equally well for each of the eight other weary-browed men who have yet to wear the diadem and be saluted with the name of Augustus.

Maximus takes the murderers of Valentinian into favour,

As for the Emperor Maximus his mingled harshness and feebleness, both misplaced, soon earned for him the execration of his subjects. They saw with astonishment the murderers Optila and Traustila not only not punished, but received into the circle of the Emperor's friends. This might be only the result of a fear of embroiling himself with the Barbarians, but it was only natural that it should be attributed to a guilty participation in their counsels. Then, after a disgracefully short interval, all Rome heard with indignation that the Empress Eudoxia had been commanded to cease her mourning for Valentinian, whom, notwithstanding his many infidelities, she fondly loved, and to become the wife of the sexagenarian Emperor. At the same time he compelled her to bestow the hand of one of her daughters on his son the Caesar Palladius. The widowed Empress¹, who was now in the 34th year of her age, was one

and forces his widow to marry him.

¹ *Εὐφροσύνη γυνὴ Εὐδοξία*, Theophanis Chronographia, p. 93 (ed. Paris, 1655).

of the loveliest women of her time. His motive BOOK III.
may have been passion, but the double marriage CH. 1.
looks rather like policy, like a determination on 455.
the part of the fire-new Emperor to consolidate
his dynasty by welding it with all that yet re-
mained on earth of the great name of Theodosius.

If this was the object of Maximus he signally Eudoxia
appeals to
the Vandal.
failed, and the precautions which he took to ensure
his safety accelerated his ruin. Eudoxia, the
daughter, the niece, and the wife of emperors,
writhed under the shame of her alliance with the
elderly official. As a still mourning widow she
resented her forced union with the man whom some
deemed an accomplice in her husband's murder.
Her aunt Pulcheria was dead, and she feared that
it was vain to hope for succour from Byzantium.
In her rage and despair, she imitated the fatal
example of Honoria, and called on the Barbarian
for aid. Not the Hun, but the Vandal was the
champion whose aid she invoked. Her emissary
reached Carthage in safety. Gaiseric, only too
thankful for a good pretext for invading Rome,
eagerly promised his aid. He fitted out his
piratical fleet, and soon from mouth to mouth in
Rome flitted the awful tidings, 'The Vandals are
coming.' Many of the nobles fled. The Emperor,
torn from his sweet clepsydra-round of duties and
pleasures, and depressed by the scorn of the
beautiful Avenger, whose love he could not win,
devised no plan for defence, but sat trembling and
helpless in his palace, and when informed of the

BOOK III. flight of the nobility could think of no more states-
 CH. I. manlike expedient than to publish a proclamation,

455. 'The Emperor grants to all, who desire it, liberty to depart from the city.' The fact was that he was meditating flight himself. Better the immediate abandonment of Empire than to sit any longer under that ever-impending sword of Damocles. But then the smouldering indignation of all classes against the man whom they deemed the author of the coming misery, burst forth. The soldiers mutinied, the rabble rose in insurrection, the servants of the Imperial Palace, faithful probably to the old Theodosian traditions, prevented the meditated escape. Soon the tragedy, which near sixty years before had been perpetrated at Constantinople (after the fall of Rufinus), was repeated in Rome. The Imperial domestics tore their new master limb from limb, and after dragging the ghastly fragments through the city, scattered them into the Tiber, so that not even the rites of burial might be granted by any one to Petronius Maximus¹.

Murder
of Maxi-
mus.

This event happened on Midsummer Day, less

¹ According to Jornandes, a Roman soldier named Ursus dealt the fatal blow. A passage in Apollinaris Sidonius (*Panegyric of Avitus*, 442) seems to attribute to the Burgundians some share in the tragedy :

'Infidoque tibi [Romae] Burgundio ductu

Extorquet trepidas mactandi principis [sc. Maximi] iras.'
 Binding (p. 49) thinks that the Burgundians had just made a foray into Italy. But the passage seems too obscure for interpretation.

than three months after the new Emperor's accession. The sails of Gaiseric's fleet are already upon the Tyrrhene sea, and before three days are ended the third great Barbarian Actor, the Vandal nation, will appear upon the stage of Italy. But, before they come, we must turn back the pages of history for awhile, and briefly trace the successive steps of the migration which had led them from the forests of Silesia to the burning shores of Africa.

BOOK III.

CH. I.

455.

NOTE C. ON THE CHARACTER OF PETRONIUS MAXIMUS.

NOTE C. THE account of the character and actions of this Emperor, given in the text, is drawn almost exclusively from the writings of his contemporaries—Apollinaris Sidonius (430–488) and Prosper of Aquitaine (about 400–460). In some respects it is less unfavourable than that which is usually given and which is derived from later authorities.

The chief difference is in the degree of culpability which has to be assigned to him for the death of his predecessor. Some suspicion undoubtedly rested upon him in the minds of his contemporaries, but I have endeavoured not to treat this suspicion as more of a certainty than it actually was. The obvious, patent cause of Valentinian's murder was the two barbarians' desire to revenge the death of Aetius, and, to a certain extent, the whole people and army of Rome, by witnessing it unmoved, made the crime their own. It was the extraordinary conduct of Maximus *after* the murder, in admitting the assassins to his most intimate counsels, which naturally raised a suspicion that he was their accomplice, but this suspicion does not appear ever to have reached the stage of proof. The following words of Prosper no doubt express all that the immediate contemporaries of the two emperors knew about the chief actors in the tragedy.

'As soon as this parricide' (the murder of Valentinian by the friends of Aetius) 'had been perpetrated, Maximus, a man who had twice filled the office of consul, and was of patrician rank, assumed the imperial dignity. It had been supposed that he would be in all ways serviceable to the imperilled commonwealth, but he very soon showed what disposition he was of, since he not only did not punish the murderers of Valentinian, but even received them into the circle of his friends, and moreover, forbidding the widowed Empress to mourn the loss of her lord, within a

very few days he constrained her to contract a marriage with himself.' NOTE C.

This scandal of his precipitate marriage with the widow of his predecessor, and the ruin which resulted from it for Rome, made evidently a deep impression on the minds of contemporary and succeeding annalists, especially in the Eastern Empire, and disposed them to put the harshest construction on all his previous actions. It is curious to note how the suspicion which is but faintly marked in the pages of Prosper, and is not even alluded to in those of Sidonius, deepens and hardens in the later historians.

The Spanish ecclesiastic, *Idatius* (fl. about 410-470), says that 'Maximus was racked by a disturbing fear of great commotions. Through desire of reigning he had contributed by his wicked advice to the deaths of the persons slain by Valentinian, and even to that of Valentinian himself.'

Marcellinus, a Count of the Eastern Empire (fl. 480-530), says 'Valentinian the Prince, by the stratagem of Maximus the Patrician, by whose deceit Aetius also perished, was mangled in the Campus Martius by Optila and Traustila.'

Jornandes (fl. 510-560) says, 'The Emperor Valentinian was slain by the wiles of Maximus, who then in tyrannical fashion usurped the Empire.' His elevation, in fact, appears to have been as regular as that of any other of the Emperors during this stormy time.

But the anti-Maximian prejudice reaches its height in *Procopius* (fl. 500-565), who has unfortunately made the largest contribution to the history of this Emperor with the smallest claim to be regarded as a trustworthy authority. In the long and disagreeable romance with which he favours us, Valentinian is represented as winning the ring of Maximus from him at play, entrapping his wife to the palace by means of this ring, and then seducing her. The dishonour of his wife fills the mind of Maximus with thoughts of vengeance, in order to accomplish which he first of all induces Valentinian to assassinate Aetius, and then, 'without any trouble, he killed the Emperor and took the sovereignty.' He marries Eudoxia, and incautiously tells

NOTE C. her one night that it was for love of her that he killed her late husband. As soon as day dawns she sends the fatal message to Gaiseric, knowing that she will receive no help from Byzantium.

It is not worth while to point out the internal improbabilities of this story, the jumble of different motives which it ascribes to the chief actors, the disparity of years between Valentinian the seducer and his victim (who was mother of a grown-up son and wife to the elderly Maximus), and other points which might be remarked upon. The history into which it is inserted is thoroughly inaccurate in a chronological point of view (for instance, it represents the fall of Aquileia as succeeding the death of Aetius), and Procopius, even in reference to the events of his own time, is notoriously apt to let his history degenerate into a mere 'chronique scandaleuse,' inserting apparently many an unauthentic piece of gossip, simply because it is unsavoury. Gibbon truly remarks that 'Procopius is a fabulous writer for the events which precede his own memory.' Whatever judgment we may be disposed to pass on the alleged share of Maximus in the murder of his predecessor—and I am disposed to ask for a verdict of 'Not Proven'—at least let the obvious fables of Procopius no longer pass current as History.